



# Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows

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# Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows

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# Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows

## 1. Introduction

Congratulations on becoming a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow! By joining the MSCA, you are about to take your career to the next level.

As an MSCA fellow, you have rights and obligations that mostly concern your employment conditions, integrity and excellence. This document provides an overview of these as well as further information related to:

- Career development activities in addition to your research
- Supervision and career guidance
- Open Science and responsible research and innovation
- Inclusiveness and gender equality
- Communication, dissemination and exploitation
- Sustainable research and the principles of the MSCA Green Charter
- National Contact Points and other assistance and information services
- Opportunities after the fellowship
- Online resources

To fully understand your position, you should familiarise yourself with the [MSCA part for the Horizon Europe Work Programme](#), as well as the specifics of the grant agreement between the European Research Executive Agency (REA) and your host institution. You should receive a copy of the specific grant agreement for your project, together with its annexes, from the project coordinator or from your host beneficiary. That document outlines the scope and nature of the research that will be undertaken and the training that will be provided. The beneficiaries are contractually obliged to implement the project as described in the grant agreement. Each grant agreement consists of a "general grant agreement" that is essentially the same for all projects, and Annexes – Part A and Part B – which are specific to the project in question.

On the [Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal](#) you will be able to access the MSCA Work Programme and General Annexes to the Horizon Europe Work Programme (make sure that you check the version under which the grant for your project was awarded), the unit model grant agreement, the Horizon Europe MSCA financial guide, and other useful documentation.

Please note that this document should be read in conjunction with the Information note specific to your action accompanying this information package.

## 2. Your rights and obligations

Your employer is expected to support you and manage the MSCA grant in accordance with the provisions of the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#). These documents are addressed to researchers as well as to employers and funders in both the public and private sectors. They are key elements of European Union policy to make research an attractive career, by establishing some core rights and obligations.

The [European Charter for Researchers](#) should be your first reference to address issues relating to research freedom, ethical principles, professional attitude, accountability, and relations with your supervisor. The Charter also provides standards and guidance on non-discrimination, gender balance, and working conditions, as well as on intellectual property rights and other topics. The [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#) on the other hand deals with matters of recruitment and selection, such as transparency or proper recognition of qualifications and mobility experience.

For your employer, the grant agreement signed with REA contains the obligation not only to take all measures to implement the principles laid out in the Charter and the Code of Conduct, but also to inform you and all participants involved in the action about them. The employer is required to make its best effort to apply all of the principles set out in the Charter and the Code of Conduct. Some of these principles are also contractually binding, for example:

- Informing you about key elements of the grant and the allowances you are entitled to receive (namely a living allowance, mobility allowance and, if applicable, family, long-term leave and/or special needs allowances in the case of recruited researchers; a top-up allowance and if applicable, a special needs allowance in the case of seconded staff)
- Ensuring that you are adequately supervised and receive appropriate career guidance
- Providing training and the necessary means for implementing the action
- Ensuring that personalised career development plans are established, support their implementation and update in view of your needs

Your status as an MSCA fellow also carries certain obligations, for example:

- Working exclusively for the action, unless part-time work is allowed by the action and has been approved
- Informing the host organisation as soon as possible of any events or circumstances likely to affect your fellowship
- Ensuring visibility of received EU funding in communications, publications and patent applications
- Completing and submitting an evaluation questionnaire at the end of your fellowship and a follow-up questionnaire two years afterwards.

Further information on your rights and obligations can be found in the Information note specific to your action accompanying this document and in the grant agreement between the REA and your host institution.

### 3. Career Development Activities

In line with the [European Charter for Researchers](#), the MSCA put special emphasis on skills development and improving the career prospects of researchers.

Therefore, you may undertake professional training and development activities during your fellowship, such as:

- Complementary training in transferable skills such as proposal writing, research management, open science, FAIR<sup>2</sup> data management, intellectual property rights, patent submission, innovation and entrepreneurship, communication, etc.
- Attendance of conferences and workshops to boost your competences and networking capacity
- Outreach and/or citizen engagement activities
- Teaching
- Language courses

Career development activities are complementary and should not interfere with the research element of the project.

You may also join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) (MCAA) to connect with other fellows. The MCAA is an international non-profit organization established and supported by the European Commission, which is governed by volunteer members and with a bottom-up approach at its core. The vibrant MCAA community brings together all career stages from all scientific disciplines, encouraging networking and cooperation, making the MCAA a forum for debate between researchers and with society. The MCAA is a major platform for researchers to contribute to shaping science policy in Europe, providing career development opportunities and supporting the wider research community on topics affecting research and researchers' lives. Participation in MCAA is free of charge.

### 4. Supervision and career guidance

In line with the principles set out in the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#), the MSCA promote the effective supervision of researchers. MSCA beneficiaries must ensure adequate supervision, mentoring and appropriate career guidance for researchers.

Good supervision contributes to creating a supportive environment for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and staff to conduct their work and is of high importance for their career advancement.

Your host organisation must ensure adequate supervision or mentoring and appropriate career guidance. The grant agreement between your employer and REA contains the details of the supervision arrangements that were included in the proposal. Where supervision will also be provided by another institution, this should

be clearly specified in the grant agreement. Your supervisor(s) should also be explicitly named in your contract.

In addition, the [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#) serve as a reference for host institutions and supervisors to ensure that researchers are adequately supervised from the outset and throughout the duration of their research project.

The Guidelines provide specific recommendations for supervisors, researchers and institutions on aspects ranging from the integration of researchers, research support and career development to mentoring and wellbeing of researchers and communication and conflict resolution. They also provide guidance for the training and professional development of the supervisors themselves.

All participants are expected to adhere to these guidelines on a best-effort basis, taking into account differing situations, disciplines, levels of experience and training of researchers.

The MSCA guidelines aim to complement other initiatives and codes of practice, which exist at institutional level.

Excellent supervision includes providing support and guidance, monitoring and assessing progress, counselling on career development, raising awareness on wellbeing, providing regular feedback, and ensuring clear and open communication. If you feel that there is insufficient expertise or commitment to guide and support you in your research, you should not hesitate to voice these concerns clearly and in time to your employer (for example to your supervisor), or project coordinator.

MSCA beneficiaries are encouraged to consider the measures set out in the [MSCA Guidelines for Inclusion of Researchers at Risk](#) in order to widen access for researchers at risk to their projects including through tailored support and career services and job search assistance in the researcher's new geographical area<sup>3</sup>. Researchers at risk include researchers, scholars and scientists at all stages of their careers who are experiencing threats to their life, liberty or research career, and those who are forced to flee or have been displaced because of such threats.

## 5. Open science and responsible research and innovation

The MSCA promote Open Science and Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). One of the expected impacts of the four main actions of MSCA is to foster the culture of open science. Open Science is an approach based on open cooperative work and systematic sharing of knowledge and tools as early and widely as possible in the process. Open Science practices include:

- Early and open sharing of research (for example through pre-registration, registered reports, pre-prints, or crowd-sourcing)
- Research output management
- Measures to ensure reproducibility of research outputs



- Providing open access to research outputs (such as publications, data, software, models, algorithms, and workflows)
- Participation in open peer-review
- Involving all relevant knowledge actors including citizens, civil society and end users in the co-creation of research and innovation agendas and contents (such as citizen science).

As an MSCA fellow, you should remain aware of the most important principles of RRI, to steer research and innovation towards addressing key societal challenges and meeting the expectations of European citizens. There are six keys to RRI: Engagement of all societal actors (researchers, industry, policy-makers and the civil society), Gender Equality in human resources management and in research and innovation content, quality Science Education for the next generation of researchers, Open Access to research results of publicly-funded projects, Ethics as a basis for increased social relevance and acceptability of research, and Governance – actions to mainstream RRI principles within organisations.

In the context of RRI and good research practice in general, openness and transparency are paramount. In order to benefit society at large, the products of your work will need to be disseminated through communication and publishing in order to be exploited, as well as possibly transferred into other research settings. You might be expected to take part in your host's communication plan to ensure a high visibility of the funded research and to help maximise the impact of the results.

The MSCA explicitly support open access to research results and MSCA projects have to comply with several obligations on open science. In sum, beneficiaries/authors must:

- ensure open access to peer-reviewed scientific publications resulting from MSCA funding, depositing their publication in a trusted repository. Furthermore, provide information via the repository on outputs/tools/instruments needed to validate the conclusions of publications. Metadata of deposited publications must be open and in line with the FAIR principles;
- manage responsibly the digital research data generated in the action in line with the FAIR principles, establishing a research data management plan and ensuring open access to research data via a trusted repository. Furthermore, provide information via the repository on outputs/tools/instruments needed to re-use or validate the data. Metadata of deposited data must be open and in line with the FAIR principles;

More details on mandatory and recommended open science practices can be found in the [Horizon Europe Programme Guide](#) and Annex 5 of the [Horizon Unit Model Grant Agreement](#).

## 6. Inclusiveness and gender equality

In line with the [European Charter for Researchers](#) and the [Code of Conduct for the recruitment of Researchers](#), your MSCA project is encouraged to embrace diversity,

create inclusive working conditions and take measures to promote equal opportunities for all researchers – including in recruitment, training and career development – in the implementation of the project and facilitate mobility and counter-act gender and disability related barriers to it.

In most cases, your organisation has also been required to have a Gender Equality Plan. This document is publicly available and outlines your organisation's policy when it comes to gender equality and other important aspects such as work-life balance, gender equality in recruitment and career progression, gender based-violence and the integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content.

The MSCA also seek to ensure fair access to doctoral education, research training, skills development and knowledge transfer for researchers with disabilities, to stimulate an inclusive and non-discriminatory employment and research and innovation labour market participation, as well as to support their cross-border mobility experiences in the framework of the MSCA.

The MSCA address the gender pay gap and support equal opportunities through the provision of an equal pay for all fellows. As an MSCA researcher, you might also be entitled to specific benefits and conditions that facilitate work-life balance and create a gender-equal and inclusive working environment where you can thrive:

- A family allowance, if you have any family obligations or acquire them during your fellowship.
- A long-term leave allowance, in case of leave, including maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave, longer than 30 consecutive days.
- A special needs allowance for MSCA fellows with a long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment.

Further information on these allowances can be found in the Information note specific to your action accompanying this document, as well as the applicable [MSCA Work Programme](#).

Gender is also a cross-cutting issue within Horizon Europe, meaning that as an MSCA fellow you should reflect on how your own research may have an impact on issues such as gender equality, group-based discrimination, etc. Integrating the gender and sex dimensions in your research will improve its quality as well as the relevance to society of the knowledge, technologies and innovations you will produce. Although your project or research might not have an obvious link to gender aspects, it might indirectly touch on one or more such issues. Your MSCA project might provide you with specific training and guidance on how to enhance the relevance of your research by integrating the gender dimension into it.

## 7. Communication, dissemination and exploitation

Beneficiaries of MSCA funding must carry out activities to increase the impact of their project's research results:

- They must share research results with the scientific community, commercial players, civil society and policymakers ('dissemination').
- They must also take action to use your project results for commercial purposes, to tackle societal problems or in policymaking ('exploitation').

As a successful researcher you should also be ready to take part in promoting research as a career choice, especially to young people. Engagement with the general public helps to promote the understanding of science and is also a way for you to better understand public expectations and concerns about science and technology. The European Commission provides several opportunities to reach out to the public through the [European Researchers' Night and Researchers at Schools](#), as well as the [Science is Wonderful!](#) initiative, but there are a myriad of initiatives around you that will allow you to reach out to non-specialised audiences.

You might also want to engage with the scientific community, civil society, commercial players and policy-makers and support their decision-making process by disseminating your scientific findings. Your research might fuel certain public debates and underpin societal decisions with the best scientific evidence.

Your MSCA project and organisations such as the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) might provide you with specific training on how to convey your messages to these diverse audiences, position yourself and make your voice be heard. You might also apply to research and innovation contests and prizes to give visibility to your research. The European Union organises several prizes that reward outstanding research results and careers. Some of them include the [EU Prize for Women Innovators](#), the [Innovation Radar Prize](#) or the [Horizon Impact Award](#).

Your MSCA project might also lead to specific results, such as publications, patents, outputs subject to intellectual property rights. The European Commission offers a number of free-of-charge services to support your dissemination and exploitation activities. You should always contact your supervisor or employer to see how to make use of such services.

- [Open Research Europe platform](#): An open access, free-of-charge publishing platform for scientific papers for Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe beneficiaries, including an open peer review and article revision.
- [Horizon Results platform](#): A platform for showcasing your research results, finding collaboration opportunities and getting inspired by the results of others.
- [Horizon Results Booster](#): Free consulting services including a portfolio dissemination and exploitation strategy, business plan development and go-to-market support.
- [European Standardisation Booster Service for EU Projects](#): supports projects to contribute to standardisation in Europe and beyond.
- [Innovation Radar](#): An initiative that identifies high-potential innovations, based on a data-driven methodology, and assists EU-funded researchers and innovators in reaching the market with their innovation.
- [Intellectual Property Helpdesk](#): Aiming to support IP capacity building along the full scale of IP practices, this initiative provides free-of-charge, first-line support to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on IP management, protection and enforcement covering six different regions:

China, Europe, India, Latin America, South-East Asia and Africa. The European IP Helpdesk additionally assists SMEs and researchers participating in EU-funded research and innovation projects in dealing with IP issues related to these specific programmes.

## 8. Sustainable research and the MSCA Green Charter

As the EU's flagship programme for the mobility and training of researchers, as well as the development of doctoral programmes, the MSCA is committed to tackling climate and environmental-related challenges.

The [MSCA Green Charter](#) lays down a set of general principles and objectives that promote the sustainable implementation of research activities in line with the [European Green Deal](#), the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#).

The [MSCA Green Charter](#) is a code of good practice for all recipients of MSCA funding – both individuals and institutions – that promotes the mainstreaming of environmental considerations in all aspects of project implementation. In so doing, the Charter seeks to reduce the environmental footprint of MSCA-funded projects, to raise awareness of environmental sustainability, and to serve as a catalyst in promoting best practice in sustainable research management.

All participants in MSCA-funded projects are encouraged to adhere to the Charter on a “best effort” basis, and to commit to as many of its provisions as possible during the implementation of their respective projects. Some measures individuals are invited to consider are to:

- Mainstream sustainability and environmental considerations in relevant aspects of the project's implementation, including teaching and learning
- Prevent or minimise the production of waste and harmful substances
- Prioritise low carbon forms of transportation for all project-related travel, including commuting
- Employ teleconferencing tools as a complement to physical attendance at events
- Minimise the use of energy, water, or other scarce resources in the implementation of the project

At final reporting stage, all MSCA projects will be asked to report on the ways they have sought to minimise the environmental impact of their research activities and how they applied the principles of the Green Charter.

## 9. Tackling research and innovation foreign interference

The European Commission attaches great importance to the issue of foreign interference in research and innovation. The Commission has therefore published a toolkit, which provides information on practices to mitigate foreign interference risks to Europe's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Research Performing

Organisations (RPOs) in support of their endeavour to safeguard their fundamental values, including academic freedom, integrity and institutional autonomy and to protect their staff, students, research findings and assets. Accordingly, it does not intend to limit international collaboration but rather to promote international collaboration that is as open as possible and as closed as necessary. Moreover, it is not designed to burden HEIs and RPOs with additional administration but to encourage integration of possible measures as much as possible in existing structures.

## 10. National Contact Points, other assistance and information services and complaints

In case you need further clarification with regard to any of the aspects of your fellowship, you could contact either your supervisor or another representative of your employer, or any of the [MSCA National Contact Points](#) (NCP). NCPs are national structures which are able to provide personalised support in the local language. Many of them have a specialised Contact Point dealing with the MSCA. NCPs in different countries are in regular touch with each other, so you will be signposted to the most appropriate source of advice.

For general queries about Horizon Europe, you can contact the [Research Enquiry Service](#), which deals with questions regarding European Research, available funding instruments in the field of research and the validation process of participants.

In addition, the [European Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk](#) offers free-of-charge support on Intellectual Property matters to beneficiaries of EU-funded research projects.

Finally, the [EURAXESS](#) portal offers access to personalised help with relocation for internationally mobile researchers, through a network of EURAXESS Service Centres located across Europe. The portal also includes a range of other services, such as information and networking for researchers working outside Europe. The portal is periodically updated to include new features, so please visit it regularly.

If you are encountering specific issues with your projects, you should raise these with your employer (for example your supervisor), or project coordinator. If they cannot resolve the issue, then please contact the organisation coordinating the project, if this is different from your employer. Only in the exceptional cases where problems remain after this dialogue should you inform the relevant Project Officer at REA. The coordinator of your project will have the contact details of this person. However, please raise the matter first with your employer or project coordinator (if applicable), before contacting REA.

## 11. Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship

For fellows coming towards the end of their MSCA fellowship and looking for the next opportunities, you will find below some ideas for opportunities after your MSCA project:

- You can join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association](#) (MCAA) since the start of your fellowship, if not done so already, to stay connected to the wider MSCA community of alumni.
- Depending on your career stage and/or future positions, you may still be eligible to apply or participate in other MSCA actions. Have a look at the [MSCA website](#) to learn more about the five different actions.
- The [European Research Council](#) also supports excellent frontier research through different grant schemes open for researchers of any nationality, in any fields of research and at different stages of their career.
- [EURAXESS](#) portal publishes job vacancies, hosting offers and funding opportunities for researchers which could be of interest.
- For researchers with innovation or business ideas, the [Enterprise Europe Network](#) provides support for business innovation, advice as well as matchmaking services to help turn innovative ideas into concrete products or services and commercial successes.
- Similarly, the [European Institute for Innovation and Technology](#) and its Knowledge and Innovation Communities develop activities linked to entrepreneurial education, business creation, innovation projects, regional innovation, global outreach and citizen engagement, which could be of interest. Have a look at the guide [here](#) to learn more about potential opportunities.
- For researchers already looking to fund the development, deployment or scaling up of a new breakthrough technology or innovation stemming from their research results, the [European Innovation Council](#) has developed several funding schemes that could be of interest.

## 12. Online resources

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions website**

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

- **European Research Executive Agency website**

[https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions\\_en](https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-marie-sklodowska-curie-actions_en)

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions on Facebook**

<https://www.facebook.com/Marie.Curie.Actions>

- **Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions on Twitter**

<https://twitter.com/mscactions>

- **MSCA publications and factsheets**

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/document-library>

- **Marie Curie Alumni Association**

<https://www.mariecuriealumni.eu/>

- **Horizon Europe website**

[https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)

- **Funding and Tenders Opportunities Portal**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

- **MSCA part of the Work Programme:** see “Work Programme & Call Documents” section under the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/reference-documents>

- **HE Unit Model Grant Agreement**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga\\_he\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/agr-contr/unit-mga_he_en.pdf)

- **Horizon Europe MSCA Financial Guide**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/horizon-msca-financial-guide\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/horizon-msca-financial-guide_en.pdf)

- **Horizon Europe Programme Guide**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide\\_horizon\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/programme-guide_horizon_en.pdf)

- **European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers**

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15135-2023-ADD-1/en/pdf>

<https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/european-charter>

- **Guidelines for MSCA Supervision**

<https://marie-skłodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-guidelines-on-supervision>

- **MSCA Green Charter**

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/msca-green-charter>

- **Guidelines for inclusion of Researchers at Risk**

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/about-msca/guidelines-for-inclusion-of-researchers-at-risk>

- **National Contact Points**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/ncp>

- **Research Inquiry Service**

[https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/contact-us/research-enquiry-service\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/contact-us/research-enquiry-service_en)

- **The European Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk**

<https://www.iprhelpdesk.eu/>

- **EURAXESS portal**

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/>

- **Horizon Dashboard**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/horizon-dashboard>

- **Become an expert evaluator**

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/work-as-an-expert>

- **European Research Council**

<https://erc.europa.eu/homepage>

- **Enterprise Europe Network**

<https://een.ec.europa.eu/>

- **Synergies between the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/40f1a820-2cc2-11ed-975d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



- **European Innovation Council**

[https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

- **Toolkit on Tackling R&I Foreign Interference**

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/3faf52e8-79a2-11ec-9136-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>





# Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in a Co- funding of regional, national and international programme (COFUND)

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## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in a Co- funding of regional, national and international programme (COFUND)**

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# Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in a Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND)

This document complements the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows* with information on the conditions of appointment and remuneration specifically for those holding an MSCA fellowship as part of a Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes (COFUND). Quotations in italics are from the Horizon Europe Unit Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA) for COFUND.

## 1. What is COFUND?

[COFUND](#) stands for "Co-funding of regional, national and international programmes". The scheme aims to stimulate regional, national or international programmes to foster excellence in researchers' training, mobility and career development, spreading the best practices of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

This is achieved by co-funding new or existing regional, national, and international programmes to open up to, and provide for, international, intersectoral and interdisciplinary research training, as well as transnational and cross-sectoral mobility of researchers at all stages of their career.

COFUND supports Doctoral Programmes (D) and Postdoctoral Programmes (P) for the most promising researchers at different stages of their careers. The programmes must run a selection process based on openness, transparency, merit, impartiality and equality for the researchers who are applying.

### 1.1. Doctoral programmes

Doctoral programmes offer research training activities to allow doctoral candidates to develop and broaden their skills and competencies. They lead to the award of a doctoral degree in at least one EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

Substantial training modules, including digital ones, addressing key transferable skills and competencies common to all fields and fostering the culture of Open Science, innovation and entrepreneurship will be supported. They will include, inter alia, training on the use of collaborative tools, opening access to publications and to research data, FAIR data management, public engagement and citizen science. The training follows the [EU Principles on Innovative Doctoral Training](#).

Collaboration with a wider set of partners, including from the non-academic sector, which may provide hosting or secondment opportunities or training in research or transferable skills, as well as innovative elements of the proposed programme is valued.

Each researcher must be enrolled in a doctoral programme. Attention is paid to the quality of supervision and mentoring arrangements as well as career guidance.

## 1.2. Postdoctoral programmes

Postdoctoral Programmes fund individual advanced research training and career development fellowships for postdoctoral researchers. The programmes should offer training to develop key transferable skills and competencies common to all fields, foster innovation and entrepreneurship and promote and (where appropriate) reward Open Science practices (open access to publications and to research data, FAIR data management, public engagement and citizen science, etc.).

On top of compulsory international mobility, applicants are encouraged to include elements of cross-sectoral mobility and interdisciplinarity into their programmes. Researchers must be able to freely choose a research topic and the appropriate organisation to host them, fitting their individual needs.

## 2. COFUND researchers

### 2.1. Eligibility

COFUND offers funding for researchers at different stages of their career. To be eligible for recruitment within a COFUND project, researchers must comply with the following conditions at the deadline of the co-funded programme:

- For COFUND Doctoral Programmes, researchers must be doctoral candidates, i.e., not already in possession of a doctoral degree at the deadline of the co-funded programme's call;
- For COFUND Postdoctoral Programmes, researchers must be in possession of a doctoral degree at the deadline of the co-funded programme's call. Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will also be considered as postdoctoral researchers and will be considered eligible to apply.

### 2.2. Mobility Rule

The MSCA are based on the principle of physical mobility. Researchers may not have resided or carried out their main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary or implementing partner (or — in case of international European interest organisations — with this organisation) for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately before the co-funded programme's call deadline, unless otherwise specified in Annex I for existing programmes.

Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention are not taken into account.

Recruited researchers can be of any nationality. For COFUND Postdoctoral Programmes: researchers must be nationals or long-term residents of an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country, in case the main part of the research training activities is carried out in a country other than an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.



## 3. What are my rights and obligations as a COFUND research fellow?

Beneficiaries in COFUND projects sign a contract (or "grant agreement") with the REA and therefore legally commit to implement the proposed project in conformity with the provisions of that contract. These rules seek to guarantee a number of rights for researchers recruited in a COFUND project. They also impose some obligations, both on the beneficiaries and on the recruited researchers. Each grant agreement consists of a "core grant agreement" that is essentially the same for all projects, and Annexes – Part A and Part B – which are specific to the project in question. Part A contains the administrative details and information that will be used in the evaluation of the COFUND proposal, while part B describes all the specificities of the COFUND project, including the salary amount and any other allowances that you shall receive.

### 3.1. Employment

You should normally be recruited with an employment contract (including sickness, parental, unemployment and invalidity benefits, pension rights, benefits in respect of accidents at work and occupational diseases). An exemption from this rule can be accepted only in cases where national legislation or the equivalent internal regulations of International European Research Organisations (IERO), entities created under Union law, or an international organisation, prohibit this possibility and subject to the prior agreement of the granting authority. The contract should also specify your gross and net salary. A clear explanation of how your net salary is calculated should also be provided by your employer.

Note that recruitments in COFUND can be for a minimum duration of 3 months. However, the specific length of your recruitment will have been agreed beforehand with the REA and must be specified in your employment contract. You should be fully aware of and understand all the provisions of your contract before signing it. This may require a translation of the contract into English or your mother tongue.

The project consortium is required to submit electronically a Researcher Declaration within 20 days of your recruitment<sup>1</sup>. The content of this document should correctly reflect the provisions of your employment contract, including duration, contract type, etc.

### 3.2. Career Development Plan

A Career Development Plan must be jointly established by the supervisor and each recruited researcher upon recruitment. In addition to research objectives, this Plan comprises the researcher's training and career needs, including training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications and participation in conferences and events aimed at opening science and research to citizens. The Plan must be established at the beginning of the recruitment and should be revised (and updated where needed) within 18 months.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 19.1 of the model grant agreement for COFUND.

### 3.3. Assistance

Your host beneficiary is required to assist you in all administrative procedures related to your recruitment within the project<sup>2</sup>, for example in obtaining a visa, preparing your Career Development Plan, etc. They are also required to inform you about your rights and obligations under the grant agreement, including who will be your supervisor, when and for how long your appointment shall last, your salary and conditions, the allowances you are entitled to receive, etc.

In case you need any further clarification with regard to any of the aspects of your fellowship, you can also contact any of the [MSCA National Contact Points \(NCP\)](#). Please refer to the general information package for additional resources available depending on your need.

### 3.4. Hosting

Each beneficiary must host the recruited researchers at their premises or at implementing partners and provide training as well as the necessary means for implementing the action. Your normal place of employment and where you turn up for work each day should therefore be the premises of the institution that has recruited you and which is paying your COFUND allowance (see below). Your host institution should provide you with the resources and equipment required to conduct your work. Should it be necessary for you to use the infrastructure or premises of other partners in order to conduct your research, this should be outlined in your contract of employment.

### 3.5. Supervision

In the doctoral programme your host institution shall appoint a supervisor with adequate experience to provide you with academic support and a career plan. Your host institution should also be able to ensure adequate supervision of your research. The [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#) serve as a reference for host institutions and supervisors to ensure that researchers are adequately supervised from the outset and throughout the duration of their research project. How "adequate supervision" is understood, however, will depend on your employer, on yourself, and on the particular field of research. It should, however, be adequate for you to satisfactorily complete your research project. Where supervision is provided by someone based at another organisation, this should be clearly specified in the grant agreement.

## 4. Allowances

The funds provided to your host beneficiary for the purposes of implementing the project contribute to costs of researchers including remuneration payable to the individual doctoral or postdoctoral researcher recruited under an employment contract/equivalent direct contract with full social security coverage and complying with the applicable social security legislation, as well as the mobility costs and, if

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<sup>2</sup> See Article 15.1.2 of the model grant agreement for COFUND.

applicable, the family costs. The funds can also contribute to costs related to training, research expenses, transfer of knowledge and networking activities of researchers, costs of managing the actions and indirect costs (see relevant MSCA Work Programme for details).

#### 4.1. Researcher Remuneration (COFUND allowance)

You should request from your employer a clear overview of how your monthly remuneration is calculated (both the gross amount and the amount net of all taxes and deductions). Note that the total amount received may vary from beneficiary to beneficiary, even within the same country. This is because beneficiaries can deduct employer as well as employee payroll taxes and social security costs from the gross salary.

Your employer should explain to you your salary and conditions, the allowances you are entitled to receive in accordance with the Annex I of the grant agreement (signed between REA and the beneficiary). Besides, this information should also be provided in the publication of the call to which you are applying. The gross salary of the researcher (excluding employer's contribution to tax and social security) must be the same than the one indicated in the call documents.

The monthly COFUND allowance including gross remuneration, i.e., salaries, social security contributions, taxes and other costs or compulsory deductions under national legislation linked to in the remuneration, and the mobility costs for the benefit of the researchers can be found in the applicable call conditions.

#### 4.2. Long-Term living allowance

The long-term leave allowance can be requested by the beneficiary at any time during the project implementation in the case of leave of a researcher, including maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave, longer than 30 consecutive days. The long-term allowance can be requested when the need arises.

#### 4.3. Special Needs allowance

Beneficiaries of COFUND grants can apply for a dedicated special needs allowance. This allowance will cover the additional costs that researchers/staff members with disabilities face due to the increased costs of their mobility. It can also be used to ensure necessary assistance by third persons or for adapting their work environment. It cannot cover costs which are already covered by another source, such as social security or health insurance. The special needs allowance can be requested at any time during the implementation of the project.

### 5. Secondments

Spending periods of secondment at other beneficiaries and/or partners within the project is actively encouraged insofar as this is useful for your research and/or

training. Inter-sectoral secondments (i.e., between the academic and non-academic sectors, or vice-versa) are particularly encouraged.

However, if a secondment to an organisation in any [Third Country](#) constitutes the main part of the research training activities, researchers must be nationals or long-term residents of a EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country. Long-term residence means a period of legal and continuous residence within an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country of at least 5 consecutive years.

The duration of the secondments should be limited to a maximum of one third of the actual months spent implementing the research training activities under the action or, if applicable, of the duration of the outgoing phase for Postdoctoral Programmes.

Secondments cannot take place during the mandatory twelve-month return period to the host organisation in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

## 6. Specific Issues

### 6.1. For the Doctoral Programme

Researchers must be enrolled in a doctoral programme leading to the award of a doctoral degree in at least one EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

### 6.2. For the Postdoctoral Programme

For Postdoctoral Programmes where the main part of the research training activity does not take place in an [EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country](#) (i.e., outgoing phase), the researcher should carry out a mandatory return period of 12 months at the premises of the beneficiary or the recruiting implementing partner. A maximum of three months can be spent at the start of the action at the beneficiary (or any other organisation mentioned in the description of the action), allowing the researcher to spend time there before the outgoing phase.

### 6.3. Ethics and Research Integrity

Beneficiaries must ensure that the project complies with ethical principles, including the highest standards of research integrity<sup>3</sup>, and all applicable international, EU and national law. Any specific ethics requirements will be outlined in the Description of the action (Annex 1 to the grant agreement), including any documentation or certificates to be provided to the REA before the research work in question begins.

In the case of any research that involves the use of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) or human embryos (hE), the researcher must contact his/her supervisor as the beneficiary shall inform the Research Executive Agency (REA) in writing. Such research may not start without the explicit approval in writing from the REA to the

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<sup>3</sup> Article 14 of the COFUND Grant Agreement

beneficiary, following approvals within the ethics review procedure and the approval of the relevant Programme Committee.

Should any ethics concerns arise during project implementation that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or project coordinator, please refer to the complaint's procedure below.

## 6.4. Teaching

Complementary skills training (e.g., a teaching activity as part of the research training) are not incompatible but must not jeopardise the implementation of the research training activities. Teaching is permitted, insofar as it does not jeopardise the fulfilment of your research activities within the project.

## 6.5. Complaints

Your project should have an internal complaints procedure in place and it should be clear to whom you should refer to in case of complaints. Should any concern arise during project implementation that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or the project coordinator, please refer to the to the guidance on complaints in the “National Contact Points, other assistance and information services and complaints” section of the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*. The REA Project Officer responsible for the COFUND programme will also attend the mid-term review meeting and will offer the recruited fellows the opportunity to discuss any concerns that may arise.

## 6.6. Part-time work

In principle, researchers should be employed full-time and devote themselves to their project on a full-time basis; however, researchers may exceptionally for personal or family reasons, in agreement with the supervisor and beneficiary, and with prior approval by the granting authority, implement their project on a part-time basis. Part-time work due to professional reasons can be requested by COFUND postdoctoral researchers only.

## 6.7. Intellectual Property Rights

The participating organisations must give you – and where appropriate their partners in the project – royalty-free access to the background and results necessary for your research work. "Background" means any data, know-how or information that is held by an organisation *before* it signs the grant agreement, and which is needed to implement the project or exploit its results. "Results" means any (tangible or intangible) output generated by the project, such as data, knowledge or information. For additional information please refer to [The European Intellectual Property Rights Helpdesk](#).

## 6.8. Acknowledgement of EU funding

Beneficiaries of the EU's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme have the obligation to explicitly acknowledge that their action [has received EU funding](#). This must be done, if possible and unless the Commission/Agency requests otherwise, in all communication, dissemination and IPR activities as well as on all equipment, infrastructure and major results funded by the grant including per reviewed publications.

## 6.9. Questionnaires

Based on Article 18.1 of the grant agreement, funded researchers are requested to submit two questionnaires about their experience: one immediately following the completion of the doctoral or postdoctoral fellowship<sup>4</sup> ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire").

We strongly value the opinions of all researchers funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA.

### **How do I submit a Questionnaire?**

The Evaluation Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#) and the Follow-up Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#). You will need to enter the project related information, including your project number and acronym.

## 7. After and during your fellowship

We very much hope you enjoy your experience within a COFUND project and that you are fully able to benefit from the research, training and networking opportunities that it offers. The lengths of the individual researchers' appointments must be at least 3 months. However, recruitment should take into account the specificities of the programmes. Doctoral programmes may take into account the national context in which the doctoral training is provided. For instance, it is expected that Doctoral programmes would offer recruitment of researchers corresponding to the typical time needed to complete a PhD in the corresponding country. For Postdoctoral programmes, the typical duration of the individual researchers' appointments varies from 12 to 36 months.

### 7.1. The Marie Curie Alumni Association

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association \(MCAA\)](#). Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for networking and peer exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present. Therefore, you are encouraged to join the association as from the start of your fellowship and invite your MSCA peers to do so.

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<sup>4</sup> Completion of doctoral or postdoctoral fellowship means the end of the employment contract and not necessarily the completion of the thesis.

## 7.2. Other opportunities

A number of other ideas for opportunities after you have completed your fellowship, as well as several online resources are listed in the information package for MSCA fellows under section 11: “Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship.”

## 8. Key terms

- **Beneficiary/Employer:** every participating organisation that signs the grant agreement with the REA is considered to be a "beneficiary". Each beneficiary receives funding directly from the project budget and will recruit and host researchers in the context of the project.
- **Implementing partners:** are third parties implementing the MSCA COFUND Doctoral or Postdoctoral programmes by recruiting researchers. Implementing partners can receive financial support from the beneficiary.
- **Associated partners:** are entities which participate in the action, but without the right to charge costs or claim contributions (e.g., they may provide training or secondments opportunities, etc.). Associated partners may not employ the researchers under the action<sup>5</sup>.
- **Unit Contributions** this refers to the fixed amounts that are paid for the implementation of the project. Those fixed amounts must be multiplied by the number of months the recruited researchers spent on research training activities ('person months'- one unit being one implemented person month).

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<sup>5</sup> For COFUND Postdoctoral Programmes outgoing phase, this restriction does not apply. The associated partner hosting the outgoing phase can conclude an additional employment contract with the researcher to ensure adequate medical/social insurance in the outgoing country.







# Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie staff members in Staff Exchanges

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## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie staff members in Staff Exchanges**

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# Information note for participants in Marie Skłodowska-Curie Staff Exchanges (SE)

This document provides information on the conditions for, and the financing of, secondments as part of a Staff Exchanges (SE) projects and complements the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*.

## 1. What is the Staff Exchanges (SE) scheme?

The [Staff Exchanges](#) scheme aims to promote inter-sector and international collaboration among organisations engaged in research and innovation (R&I) activities via the exchange of R&I personnel (staff members), to bring knowledge and ideas from research to market (and vice-versa).

SE involves R&I organisations from the academic and non-academic sectors (in particular SMEs), based in Europe (EU Member States [MS] and Horizon Europe Associated Countries [AC]<sup>1</sup>) and outside Europe (third countries). The organisations constituting the partnership contribute directly to the implementation of a joint R&I project by seconding and/or hosting eligible staff members.

## 2. SE Staff Members

### 2.1. Eligibility

To be eligible for secondment within a SE project, you must – at the date of secondment – be:

- Either doctoral or post-doctoral researcher staff<sup>2</sup>; or
- a technical, managerial, or administrative staff supporting the R&I activities of the project; and
- actively engaged in or linked to research and/or innovation activities **for at least one month (full-time equivalent) at the sending institution before the first period of secondment.**

## 3. What are my rights as a SE staff member?

### 3.1. Conditions during the secondment

Your sending organisation must ensure that your rights and obligations remain unchanged during the secondment. You must be able to enjoy at least the same standards and working conditions at the place of the implementation of the secondment as those applicable to local persons holding a similar position. Throughout your secondment, you should be covered by an adequate medical insurance scheme. After your secondment, you should be reintegrated at your sending organisation.

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<sup>1</sup> [list-3rd-country-participation\\_horizon- Euratom\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> See key terms

The participating organisations (sending/hosting) must ensure that you are seconded on a full-time<sup>3</sup> basis. You are therefore not expected to work on other R&I activities during the period that you are receiving SE funding. Equally, your sending/hosting organisation cannot require or insist that you work on other R&I activities except those of the SE project.

### 3.2. Relationship between the staff member and the sending organisation

The type of relationship (employment contract, fellowship or other) between you and your sending organisation is not pre-defined by the SE project. However, this relationship must comply with national law and internal practices and, during the secondment, confer to your sending organisation the necessary legal means in terms of controls and instructions to ensure the proper implementation of the R&I activities in line with the grant agreement. If this is not the case, the sending organisation must conclude a contract or a supplementary agreement with you which will allow this before the secondment.

### 3.3. Assistance

The participating organisations (sending/hosting) are required to assist you in all administrative procedures related to your secondment within the project<sup>4</sup>, for example in obtaining a visa, finding local accommodation, etc. They are also required to inform you about your rights and obligations under the grant agreement (GA), including when and for how long your secondment shall last and the allowances you are entitled to receive.

### 3.4. Hosting

During the secondment, your hosting institution should provide you with the resources and equipment required to conduct your work. Note that your host institution may be required to prove that your secondment took place as declared<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.5. Supervision

Your host institution should be able to ensure adequate supervision of your research to allow you to satisfactorily complete your research project while on secondment (see [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#)).

## 4. Allowances

The financial contribution provided to your sending organisation for the purposes of implementing the SE action is calculated based on unit contributions. A unit contribution is a fixed amount **per month of secondment** (called “person-month”).

The unit contributions of a SE project are divided into two categories: those for the benefit of the staff member (“staff member unit contributions”), and those for the benefit of the organisation (“institutional unit contributions”). The EU contribution is

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<sup>3</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

<sup>4</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

<sup>5</sup> Article 18 of the model grant agreement for SE

calculated by multiplying the amount per unit by the number of implemented person-months.

## 4.1. Staff member contributions

The staff member unit contribution (see relevant [MSCA Work Programme](#) for details) is a **top-up allowance** to be fully used to support your travel, accommodation, and subsistence costs during the secondment. Please note that your salary or any other type of remuneration that you might be receiving is not covered by the EU contribution. Therefore, your sending organisation is expected to continue paying your salary (or any other type of remuneration) during your stay abroad.

## 4.2. Institutional contributions

These allowances (see relevant [MSCA Work Programme](#) for details) are divided into two categories:

- **Research, training, and networking contributions:** This is a fixed amount per person-month of the secondment. Although administered by the beneficiary, this amount is intended to cover the costs associated with your participation in the project, for example attending training courses, conferences, workshops, coordination meetings and networking activities. This amount should also help to cover the cost of your research (e.g., consumables), as appropriate. Note, however, that the beneficiary is responsible for the proper use of this amount.
- **Management and indirect contributions:** This is a fixed amount per person-month of the secondment in order to cover the host institution's costs of involvement in the project.

## 4.3. Special needs allowance

This allowance contributes to the additional costs for the acquisition of special needs items and services for researchers with disabilities, whose long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments are certified by a competent national authority, and of such nature that their participation in the action may not be possible without them (e.g., assistance by third persons, adaptation of work environment, additional travel/transportation costs). These special needs items or services must not have been funded from another source (e.g., social security or health insurance). This special needs allowance should be requested when the need arises. The beneficiary where the staff belongs will contact the Project Officer at REA.

# 5. Specific Issues

## 5.1. Ethics and Research Integrity

The project must comply with ethical principles, including the highest standards of research integrity as set out in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>6</sup> and, all applicable international, EU and national law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human

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<sup>6</sup> <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/European-Code-of-Conduct-Revised-Edition-2023.pdf>



Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols. Any specific ethics requirements will be outlined in the Description of the action (Annex 1 to the grant agreement). Should any ethics concerns that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or project coordinator arise during project implementation, please refer to the complaints procedure below.

## 5.2. Complaints

Your project should have an internal complaints procedure in place, and it should be clear to whom you should refer to in case of complaints. Should any concern arise during project implementation that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or the project coordinator, please refer to the guidance on complaints in the “National Contact Points, other assistance and information services and complaints” section of the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*. The REA Project Officer responsible for your project will also attend the mid-term review meeting and will offer you the opportunity to discuss any concerns that may arise.

## 5.3. Inform your Sending and Hosting Organisation

During the secondment, you are requested to inform your sending and hosting organisation of any events or circumstances likely to affect the planned R&I activities as soon as possible. These could include, for example, encountering difficulties with your research or seeking changes in your secondment plan.

## 5.4. Suspensions

Secondments cannot be suspended. However, stays at the hosting organisation may be split into several periods. Please note that to be eligible for funding, the overall duration of a secondment (e.g., summing up all the split stays) must be at least one month, and not last longer than 12 months.

## 5.5. Teleworking/virtual mobility

Teleworking from the country of the sending organisation (i.e., no mobility) is not allowed.

## 5.6. Intellectual Property Rights

The participating organisations must give you and, where appropriate, their partners in the project, royalty-free access to the background and results necessary for your research work. "Background" means any data, know-how or information that is held by an organisation *before* it signs the GA, and which is needed to implement the project or exploit its results. "Results" means any tangible or intangible output generated by the project, such as data, knowledge, or information.

## 5.7. Confidentiality

You must maintain all necessary confidentiality relating to your research work. If the project involves, uses, or generates information that should not be made public (e.g., commercially sensitive information, business or trade secrets, confidential market

data, valuable results not yet protected by intellectual property rights, security-sensitive information, etc), it should be identified and handled as 'sensitive' in accordance with the provisions of the Model Grant Agreement<sup>7</sup>.

## 5.8. Submission of Questionnaires

Based on Article 18. of the grant agreement, funded MSCA fellows are requested to submit two questionnaires about their experience: one immediately following the completion of the fellowship ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire"). Please note that, as a MSCA Staff Exchange participant, you should complete **each form only once**, immediately after and two years **after your last secondment**.

We strongly value the opinions of all participants funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA.

## 5.9. How do I submit a Questionnaire?

The Evaluation Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#) and the Follow-up Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#). You will need to enter project related information, including your project number and acronym.

# 6. After and during your secondment

After your secondment period, you should be reintegrated into your sending organisation to share the knowledge you have gained.

You might consider other EU funding opportunities once you have completed your project.

## 6.1. MSCA Doctoral Networks (DN)

[Doctoral Networks](#) (DN) are competitively awarded, multi-beneficiary, international research and training networks providing post-graduate training in specific and interdisciplinary scientific fields. They bring together networks of research-performing institutions – both from the academic and non-academic sectors – around a common research and training programme to strengthen the career perspectives of doctoral candidates and to support entrepreneurship, creativity, and innovation in Europe and beyond.

Vacancies in DN projects are advertised and published internationally, including on the [Euraxess website](#). The recruitment procedure is open, transparent, impartial, and equitable. Therefore, the final decision is taken based on the applicants' scientific skills, the relevance of their research experience, the impact of the proposed training on their career, and ensuring a fair gender representation.

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<sup>7</sup> Article 13 of the model grant agreement for SE.

## 6.2. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

These are [individual research fellowships](#) awarded to the best or most promising researchers of any nationality looking to enhance their career development and prospects by working abroad. Two types of fellowship are funded: **European Fellowships**, whereby researchers must either move to or within Europe (Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country), and **Global Fellowships**, in which the fellow is seconded to a third country for a maximum of two years and then must return to a European host institution for a mandatory 12-month period. To be eligible, fellows must be postdoctoral researchers at the date of the call deadline, i.e., in a possession of a doctoral degree.

Funding is available for a period of between 12-24 months for European Postdoctoral Fellowships and 24-36 months for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships. More information is available in the applicable MSCA Work Programme and the respective PF Guides for Applicants.

## 6.3. The Marie Curie Alumni Association

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the [Marie Curie Alumni Association \(MCAA\)](#). Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for networking and peer exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present. Therefore, you are encouraged to join the association as from the start of your fellowship and invite your MSCA peers to do so.

## 6.4. Other opportunities

A number of other ideas for opportunities after you have completed your fellowship, as well as several online resources are listed in the general information package for MSCA fellows under section 11: "Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship".

## 7. Key terms

- **Beneficiary:** every participating organisation that signs the Grant Agreement (GA) with the European Research Executive Agency (REA) is a "beneficiary". Each beneficiary contributes directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by supervising, hosting, training and/or seconding staff members.
- **Associated Partner** organisations contribute directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by hosting, supervising, training and/or seconding staff members but do not sign the GA.
- **Staff members** are either doctoral candidates (i.e., not in possession of a doctoral degree) or post-doctoral researchers (i.e., in possession of a doctoral degree), as well as administrative, managerial, or technical staff supporting R&I activities under the action. They have been actively engaged in or linked to research and innovation activities for at least 1 month at the sending organisation prior to the secondment. They have a legal link (e.g., employment contract) with the sending organisation. They have the proper expertise and skills to implement the R&I activities in the project.
- **Full-time equivalent** is the total time, according to national law, you have been working on R&I activities measured from the date when your legal link (i.e., contract) entered into force and without interruption.
- **Secondment period** means the period(s) spent by the *staff member* in a host organisation (including travel periods) for the purpose of the action and in line with the provisions of the GA, for at least 1 month and no longer than 12 months, and between different countries. Secondments between Member States and/or Associated Countries must be interdisciplinary if in the same sector (1/3 rule – SE)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Same-sector secondments that meet the interdisciplinary conditions between institutions in EU Member States / Horizon Europe Associated Countries are eligible for funding for up to 1/3 of the project's total eligible person-months funded by the EU.

Secondments are considered as interdisciplinary if the activities performed during the secondment integrate aspects (information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, or theories) from two or more different scientific disciplines.





# Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Doctoral Networks

Version 2, date of release: June 2024

## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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Directorate C: Innovation, Digital Education and International Cooperation  
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# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Doctoral Networks**



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## Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Doctoral Networks

This document complements the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows* with information on the conditions of appointment and remuneration specifically for those holding an MSCA fellowship as part of a Doctoral Network (DN) project. Quotations in italics are from the Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA) on unit grants with information on the conditions of appointment and remuneration specifically for those holding an MSCA fellowship as part of a Doctoral Network (DN) project.

### 1. What are Doctoral Networks?

The [MSCA Doctoral Networks](#) aim to train creative, entrepreneurial, innovative and resilient doctoral candidates, able to face current and future challenges and to convert knowledge and ideas into products and services for economic and social benefit. The MSCA Doctoral Networks raise the attractiveness and excellence of doctoral training in Europe. They equip researchers with the right combination of research-related and transferable competences and provide them with enhanced career perspectives in both the academic and non-academic sectors through international, interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral mobility combined with an innovation-oriented mind-set. The scheme supports substantial training modules, including digital ones, addressing key transferable skills and competences common to all fields and fostering the culture of Open Science, innovation and entrepreneurship. These include, inter alia, training on the use of collaborative tools, opening access to publications and to research data, FAIR data management, public engagement and citizen science.

MSCA Doctoral Networks are encouraged to lead to Industrial or Joint Doctorates.

#### Industrial Doctorates

Through Industrial Doctorates, doctoral candidates step outside academia and develop skills in industry and business by being jointly supervised by academic and non-academic organisations, both of which can be established in the same EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

#### Joint Doctorates

Joint Doctorates represent a highly integrated type of international, inter-sectoral and multi/interdisciplinary collaboration in doctoral training. They lead to the delivery of joint, double or multiple doctoral degrees<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Every time this Work Programme part refers to doctoral degrees, this means that the degrees have to be recognised as such by the relevant authorities of the country or countries concerned.

## 2. Recruited researchers

### 2.1. Eligibility

To be eligible for a recruitment within a DN project, you must be a doctoral candidate, i.e. not already in possession<sup>2</sup> of a doctoral degree at the date of the recruitment.

### 2.2. Mobility Rule

The MSCA are based on the principle of physical mobility. You are therefore required to undertake transnational mobility in order to be eligible for recruitment in a DN project. As such, you must not have resided or carried out your main activity (work, studies, etc.) in the country of the recruiting beneficiary for more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before their recruitment date<sup>3</sup>.

For 'International European Research Organisations' (IERO), 'international organisations', or entities created under Union law, you must not have spent more than 12 months in the 36 months immediately before your recruitment in the same appointing organisation.

Compulsory national service, short stays such as holidays and time spent as part of a procedure for obtaining refugee status under the Geneva Convention<sup>4</sup> are not taken into account. Your employer is required to verify this fact, therefore you may be required to provide supporting documentation proving your place(s) of residence or work during the previous 3 years. Note that the mobility rule applies only to your first recruitment within the project, and not to other organisations to which you might be sent on secondment or at which you may subsequently also be recruited. Finally, the mobility rule is related to your residence or main activity and not to your nationality.

## 3. What are my rights as a DN fellow?

The MSCA grant agreement requires that you have access to the infrastructure and supervision that you need to adequately conduct your research and implement your project. Should this not be the case, please refer the matter to your project coordinator.

### 3.1. Recruitment

Vacancies in DN projects must be advertised and published internationally, including on the [Euraxess website](#) (the vacancy note must include the gross salary, not including the employer's social contributions). The recruitment procedure must be open, transparent, merit-based, impartial and equitable. Therefore, the final decision

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<sup>2</sup> Researchers who have successfully defended their doctoral thesis but who have not yet formally been awarded the doctoral degree will not be considered eligible. See Article 6.2.A(b)(i) of the HE unit model grant agreement

<sup>3</sup> Article 6.2.A(b)(vi) of the HE unit model grant agreement

<sup>4</sup> 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol

is taken on the basis of the candidates' scientific skills, the relevance of their research experience, the impact of the proposed training on their career, and ensuring a fair gender representation<sup>5</sup>.

## 3.2. Employment

In principle, you should be recruited with an employment contract which includes social security coverage (unless this is not possible under national law). The employment contract should specify your monthly support; it can state the total/annual salary, as long as it is possible to determine the monthly salary (e.g. by dividing the annual salary by 12). It is also possible that the total amount is divided into 13 (or more) months, depending on the institution's internal practices and regulations. In some countries, a first contract of 12 or 18 months might be given, but it should then be followed by another contract covering the rest of the recruitment time. You are also encouraged to contact the HR department of your host institution if you need more details/info about your contract. A clear explanation of how your net salary is calculated should also be provided by your employer. The specific length of your recruitment must be specified in your employment contract and comply with the minimum and maximum duration as set out in the applicable call conditions. You should be fully aware of and understand all the provisions of your contract *before* signing it. This may require a translation of the contract into English or your mother tongue.

The project consortium is required to submit electronically a Mobility Declaration within 20 days of your recruitment<sup>6</sup>. This contains data about you and the provisions of your employment contract, including duration, contract type, etc., that the European Research Executive Agency (REA) requires.

## 3.3. Assistance

Your employer is required to assist you in all administrative procedures related to your recruitment within the project<sup>7</sup>, for example in obtaining a visa, preparing your Career Development Plan, etc. They are also required to inform you about your rights and obligations under the grant agreement, including who will be your supervisor, when and for how long your appointment shall last, your salary and conditions, the allowances you are entitled to receive, etc.

## 3.4. Hosting

Each employer has the obligation to host recruited researchers and provide training as well as the necessary means for implementing the action. Your usual place of employment and where you turn up for work each day should normally be at the premises of the institution that has recruited you and which is paying your living and

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<sup>5</sup> Annex 5 of the HE unit model grant agreement – Specific rules for MSCA actions

<sup>6</sup> See relevant Horizon Europe Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Work programme

<sup>7</sup> Annex 5 of the HE unit model grant agreement – Specific rules for MSCA actions

mobility allowances (see below). Note that your host institution may be required to demonstrate a proof of your *physical presence* at its premises during the period of your recruitment. Your host institution should provide you with the resources and equipment required to conduct your work. Should it be necessary for you to use the infrastructure or premises of other organisations in order to conduct your research, this should be outlined in the grant agreement.

### 3.5. Supervision

Your host institution should also be able to ensure adequate supervision of your research. How "adequate supervision" is understood, however, will depend on your employer, on yourself, and on the particular field of research. It should, however, be adequate for you to satisfactorily complete your research project. Where supervision is provided by someone based at another organisation, this should be clearly specified in the Description of Action. We also recommend that in such cases a co-supervisor is appointed in the organisation where you are hosted and trained.

For more details, you can also consult the [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#).

## 4. Allowances

The funds provided to your employer for the purposes of implementing the project are divided into two categories: those for the benefit of the researcher ("contributions for recruited researcher"), and those for the destination organisation recruiting and hosting you ("institutional contributions") (see relevant [MSCA Work Programme](#) for details).

### 4.1. Contributions for recruited researchers

These allowances are paid to you as the recruited researcher. Note that the total amount received may vary from employer to employer, even within the same country. This is because employer as well as employee payroll taxes and social security costs can be deducted from the gross salary.

- **Living Allowance:** this is the basic, gross amount that you should receive in monthly instalments *before* taxation and compulsory deductions. To ensure equal treatment and purchasing power parity, this amount is then adjusted through the application of a correction coefficient based on the country in which you have been recruited. Fellows recruited in higher cost countries therefore receive a higher gross living allowance than those recruited in lower cost countries. The coefficients applied are indicated in the corresponding [MSCA Work Programme](#). Note that each coefficient applies to the whole country in question, even if the cost of living may differ between cities or regions within that country.
- **Mobility Allowance:** This monthly allowance is intended to cover the costs associated with the fact that you have moved to a different country in order to take up your position. Furthermore, it is for your private use, therefore it is not meant to cover any expenses related to the project (such as secondment costs, travel costs for attending a conference, etc.).

- **Family Allowance:** If you have or will acquire family obligations during the action duration, you are entitled to an additional "family allowance". For the purposes of the MSCA, family is defined as "*persons linked to the researcher by marriage (or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country where this relationship was formalised) or dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher*".
- **Long-term leave allowance:** this allowance contributes to the personnel costs incurred by your recruiting institution in case of a leave, including maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave, longer than 30 consecutive days. This long-term leave should be requested when the need arises.
- **Special needs allowance:** this allowance contributes to the additional costs for the acquisition of special needs items and services for researchers with disabilities, whose long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments are certified by a competent national authority, and of such nature that their participation in the action may not be possible without them (e.g. assistance by third persons, adaptation of work environment, additional travel/transportation costs). These special needs items or services must not have been funded from another source (e.g. social security or health insurance). This allowance should be requested when the need arises.
- **Non-Eurozone recruiting institutions:** The project budget is calculated and paid in euro; employers must also report their costs in euro. Where your allowances are not paid in euro, i.e. because your employer is not located within the Eurozone, the allowances you receive may consequently fluctuate due to exchange rate changes. Your host is required to report the costs on the basis of an average of the daily exchange rates over the reporting period. It is permissible for an employer to slightly underpay a fellow on a monthly basis, as long as the fellow receives the correct amount by – at the latest – the end of their fellowship.

## 4.2. Institutional contributions

These allowances are directly managed by the employer and are divided into two categories: *Research, Training and Networking contributions*, and *Management and Indirect contributions*.

- **Research, Training and Networking contributions:** This is a fixed amount for each month a researcher is recruited in the project. Although administered by your employer, this amount is intended to cover (1) the costs associated with your participation in the project, for example attending training courses, conferences, or when travelling for a secondment and, (2) the costs associated with the overall implementation of the research and training programme of the project (e.g. part of the budget may be used to organised network-wide events and trainings, dissemination activities etc.). This amount should also help cover the cost of your research (e.g. consumables), as appropriate, and can also be used to cover other related costs, such as visas. Note, however, that this amount is administered by the host organisation, not by the fellows themselves. Therefore, please discuss with your supervisor your needs (e.g. conference attendance).

- **Management and Indirect contributions:** This is a fixed monthly amount per researcher per month in order to cover the host institution's costs of involvement in the project.

## 5. Secondments

Secondments are a period of time spent at another organisation within the consortium with the aim of implementing your individual research project. Spending periods of secondment at other institutions within the project is actively encouraged insofar as this is useful for your research or training. Inter-sectoral secondments (i.e. between the academic and non-academic sectors) are particularly encouraged. Note, however, that secondments are limited to one third of your total recruitment period within the project. Therefore, e.g. in case of recruitment for 36 months, no more than 12 months should be spent outside the organisation that is employing you. This limitation does not apply to Industrial Doctorates and Joint Doctorates projects (except for projects selected under the Doctoral Networks 2021 call).

Additional costs related to secondments of 6 months or less (e.g. housing, travel expenses) should be covered by the "Research, Training and Networking" contributions, not by your living or mobility allowance.

### 5.1. Virtual mobility

Virtual mobility is also possible. While virtual mobility does not have the same multifaceted impact on the development of individuals and sustainable cooperation among organisations as physical mobility, it can however complement it, facilitate long-distance collaboration and be an effective means to faster achieving research and training objectives. In this regard, all MSCA proposals are encouraged to explore opportunities offered by e-infrastructures and related services, in particular those provided through GEANT, the pan-European research and education network. These activities should be clearly described in the proposals, should be relevant, feasible and beneficial for the researchers, and in line with the project objectives.

In all DNs, each recruited researcher can be seconded to other beneficiaries and/or to associated partners/associated partners linked to other beneficiaries for a duration of up to one third of his/her actual recruitment period. Virtual mobility will not be considered as a regular secondment since it does not involve physical mobility. Therefore, it will not count towards the maximum duration of one third of the researcher's total recruitment period.

## 6. Specific Issues

### 6.1. Ethics and Research Integrity

The project must comply with ethical principles, including the highest standards of research integrity as set out in the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#)<sup>8</sup> and, all applicable international, EU and national law, including the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols. Any specific ethics requirements will be outlined in the Description of the action (Annex 1 to the grant agreement).

## 6.2. PhD Enrolment

All recruited researchers must be enrolled in a doctoral programme leading to the award of a degree in at least one EU Member State or Horizon Europe associated country (for joint doctorates: please check the conditions set out in the applicable call). Note that any enrolment costs or tuition fees are eligible costs and should be charged to the employer (under "Research, Training and Networking" contributions). Under no circumstances should these costs be charged to you<sup>9</sup>.

## 6.3. Teaching

Teaching during your recruitment period could be required as a condition of your PhD enrolment, but in such cases this should be outlined in your Career Development Plan and in the Description of Action. Teaching is welcome, insofar as it does not jeopardise the fulfilment of your research activities within the project.

## 6.4. Complaints

Your project should have an internal complaints procedure in place and it should be clear to whom you should refer to in case of complaints. Should any concern arise during project implementation that you are not able to satisfactorily address with your supervisor and/or the project coordinator, please refer to the guidance on complaints in the "National Contact Points, other assistance and information services and complaints" section of the general *Information package for Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellows*. The REA Project Officer responsible for your project will also attend the mid-term review meeting and will offer you the opportunity to discuss any concerns that may arise.

## 6.5. Contract Suspensions & part-time

In certain, limited cases and only with the prior agreement of the REA – it is possible for fellows to suspend the implementation of their respective fellowship. For exceptional personal reasons, it might also be possible to work part-time on your research project. In each case, this matter should be discussed beforehand with your supervisor and you should obtain the agreement of the granting authority.

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<sup>8</sup> European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity of ALLEA (All European Academies)

<sup>9</sup> Annex 5 of the HE unit model grant agreement – Specific rules for MSCA actions



## 6.6. Intellectual Property Rights

The participating organisations must give you – and where appropriate their partners in the project – access to the background and results necessary for your research work free from restrictions. "Background" means any data, know-how or information that is held by an organisation *before* it signs the grant agreement and which is needed to implement the project or exploit its results. "Results" means any (tangible or intangible) output generated by the project, such as data, knowledge or information.

## 6.7. Confidentiality

You must maintain all necessary confidentiality relating to your research work.

## 6.8. Submission of Questionnaires

Based on Article 18.1 of the grant agreement, funded researchers are requested to submit two questionnaires about their experience: one immediately following the completion of their research training activities ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire"). We strongly value the opinions of all researchers funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA.

### How do I submit a Questionnaire?

The Evaluation Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#) and the Follow-up Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#). You will need to enter project related information, including your project number and acronym.

## 7. After and during your fellowship

In any DN project, MSCA funding can support the researcher for a maximum period as set out in the [applicable call conditions](#). There is no exception to this rule, meaning that in those cases where the completion and submission of your doctoral thesis takes more time, you may need to look for additional financial support. You may therefore wish to discuss this matter with your supervisor well before the completion of your participation in the DN project.

There are, however, other EU funded opportunities that may be of interest to you once you have completed your project:

### 7.1. MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships (PF)

These are [individual research fellowships](#) awarded to the best or most promising researchers of any nationality looking to enhance their career development and prospects by working abroad. Two types of fellowship are funded: European Postdoctoral Fellowships, whereby researchers must either move to or within Europe (MS or AC), and Global Postdoctoral Fellowships in which the fellow is seconded to a third country for a maximum of two years and then must return to a European host

institution for a mandatory 12-month period. To be eligible, fellows must be postdoctoral researchers at the date of the call deadline, i.e. in a possession of a doctoral degree. At the call deadline, supported researchers must have a maximum of 8 years full-time equivalent experience in research, measured from the date of award of the doctoral degree. Funding is available for a period of between 12-24 months for European Postdoctoral Fellowships and 24-36 months for Global Postdoctoral Fellowships, with an optional additional support to carry out a placement of up to 6 months in a non-academic organisation based in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country at the end of the fellowship. More information is available in the [MSCA Work Programme](#) and the respective PF Guides for Applicants.

## 7.2. The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the [MCAA – the Marie Curie Alumni Association](#). Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for networking and peer exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present. Therefore, you are encouraged to join the association as from the start of your fellowship and invite your MSCA peers to do so.

## 7.3. Other opportunities

A number of other ideas for opportunities after you have completed your fellowship, as well as several online resources are listed in the general information package for MSCA fellows under section 11: “Looking ahead: Opportunities after your fellowship”.

## 8. Key terms

- **Beneficiary:** every participating organisation that signs the Grant Agreement (GA) with the European Research Executive Agency (REA) is considered to be a "beneficiary". Each beneficiary contributes directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by supervising, hosting, training and/or seconding staff members
- **Academic sector:** means public or private higher education establishments awarding academic degrees, public or private non-profit research organisations and International European Research Organisations (IERO).
- **Non-academic sector:** means any socio-economic actor not included in the academic sector.
- **Associated partners:** they are organisations that contribute directly to the implementation of the research, transfer of knowledge and training activities by hosting, supervising, training and/or seconding staff members but do not sign the grant agreement.
- **Entities with a legal or capital link** are organisations with an established relationship with the beneficiary which is not limited to the action nor specifically created for its implementation. These entities implement certain action tasks described in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement, i.e. hosting and training of researchers but such entities may not employ the researcher.
- **'Interdisciplinarity'** means the integration of information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts or theories from two or more scientific disciplines.
- **Secondment:** is a period of research training with another beneficiary, its entities with a capital or legal link, or a associated partner implemented to further enrich the training experience of a researcher. Secondments are an integral part of the research proposal and must be described in the proposal. They imply mobility to a beneficiary or partner organisation with specific supervision arrangements.





# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Postdoctoral Fellowships**

Version 1, Date of release: December 2023

## **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

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# **Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Postdoctoral Fellowships**

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## Information note for Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellows in Postdoctoral Fellowships

Congratulations on your successful application to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellowships (MSCA-PF). We hope that your experience as an MSCA researcher proves to be a fruitful and rewarding one, both personally and professionally.

The purpose of this short guide is to provide some information and anticipate some questions relating to the implementation of your Fellowship under Horizon Europe, the EU's key funding programme for research and innovation.

Your project will be managed by the European Research Executive Agency (REA), an agency established by the European Commission to manage EU research grants.

Although your supervisor and/or the people at your host institution responsible for administering your project should be your first points of contact, should you experience any difficulties or require any assistance, **your main contact at REA will be your designated Project Officer (PO)**. Contact with your PO should take place exclusively through the Communication Centre interface in the [Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal](#) ("the Portal"), under "Manage Project", unless you would like to discuss sensitive or private issues.<sup>1</sup>

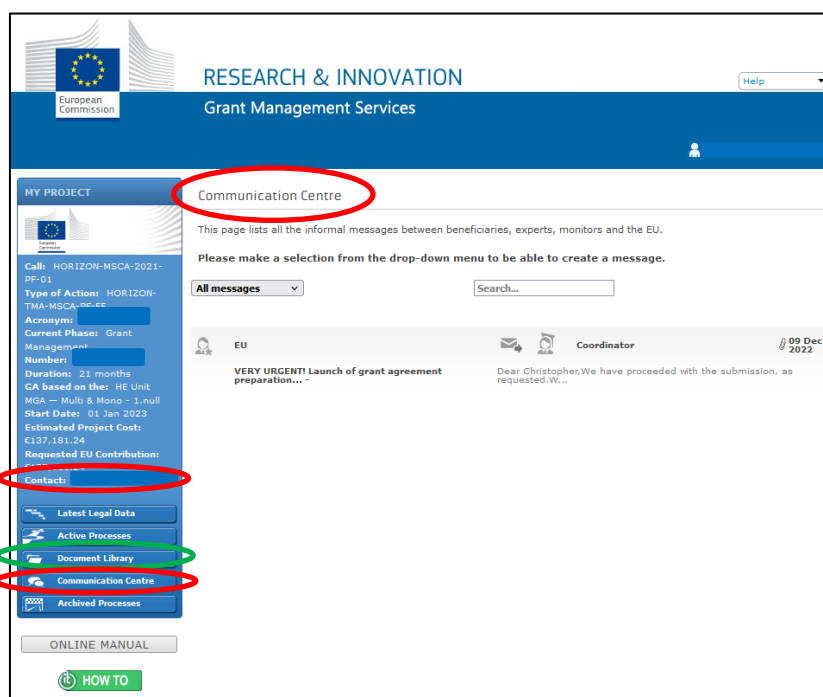


Figure 1: How to communicate with your Project Officer and how to view the grant agreement

We strongly encourage you to read carefully the grant agreement and its annexes, which represent the legal contract between REA and your host institution. These are the principal legal texts that will govern the implementation of your fellowship. You can find them under "Document Library" (see green circle in figure 1 above).

<sup>1</sup> The name of your Project Officer is indicated in the Portal under "Contact" while their telephone number and email address are available via the EU Whoiswho website. Note that any communication that takes place through the Communication Centre is visible to all of the appointed representatives for your project.

# 1. Project Implementation<sup>2</sup>

## 1.1 Researcher Mobility Declaration

A researcher "Mobility Declaration" (MD) has been introduced under Horizon Europe in order to facilitate the grant management process. This declaration is accessible via the project page on the Portal (Active Processes > Continuous Reporting data > Mobility > Mobility Declaration) and will be visible as of the start date of the project. The MD should be submitted in the system within 20 days of the start date and be kept up-to-date throughout the lifetime of the project. The MD can be reopened by the PO each time an additional change should be required. **Please note that the MD must be submitted by a representative of the beneficiary (i.e. your host institution), and not by the researcher.**

The MD should represent an accurate reflection of how the project is being implemented at any point in time, meaning that it should be updated to reflect all periods of activity, as well as suspensions, part-time work, long-term leave, secondments etc., some of which may subsequently also require a formal amendment (see below). After each change, the MD should be submitted to the PO. Guidance on how to use and complete the MD is provided throughout this document. A dedicated page is also available on the [Portal](#).

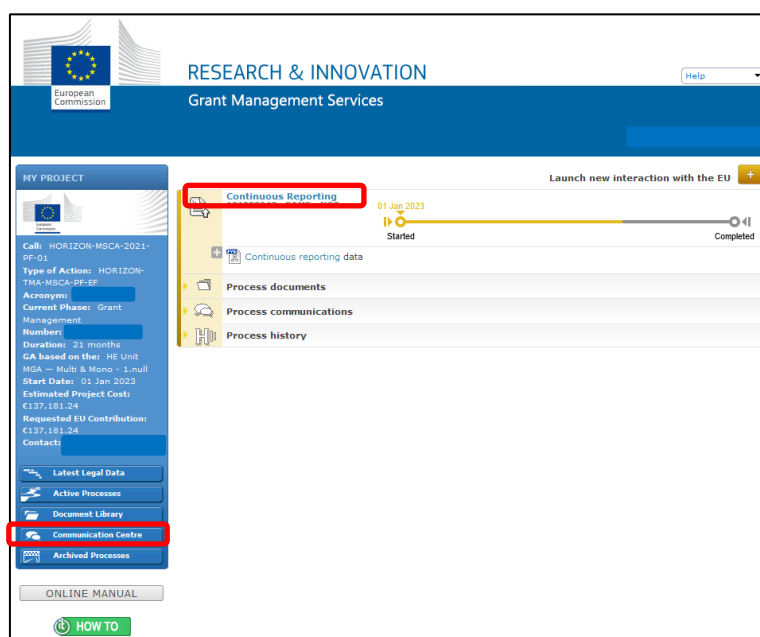


Figure 2: How to access the Continuous Reporting section for your project

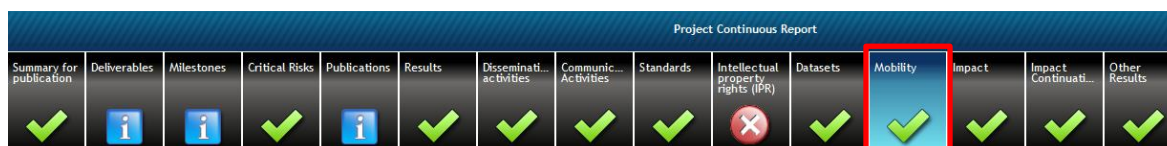


Figure 3: How to access the Mobility Declaration

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of Horizon Europe, each specific grant receiving funding is referred to as an "action". To avoid confusion with the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions, the present document instead refers to "projects".

## 1.2 Project Start Dates

During the grant agreement preparations (GAP) for your Fellowship, your host institution selected one of the two start date options below. In both cases, your project will start automatically on the date in question. However, should you anticipate any problem with starting the project on this date, please **notify your PO as soon as possible**. Note that **it is not possible** to change this date retroactively.

- **Fixed start date**  
This means that the project will start on the fixed date specified in the grant agreement. This is the day that you should start working on your project at the premises of the host institution with a signed employment contract.
- **First day of the month after entry into force of the grant agreement**  
Rarely used unless you are already employed at the host institution, this option means that the project will have started on the first day of the month after the signature of the grant agreement by REA. This also means that, as of this date, you are at the premises of the host institution with a signed employment contract and begin working on your project.

*What if you need to change the start date of your project?*

- **Starting earlier than planned**  
It may be possible to start earlier than on the date indicated in the grant agreement, if this date is in the future. In such cases, please contact your PO to see whether it remains possible to process an amendment to this effect. Note, however, that it is not normally possible to change a start date retroactively.
- **Starting later than planned**  
Again, if this date is in the future then, in some cases, it may be possible to process an amendment to the start date, if the request is received in due time (at least several weeks in advance of the originally planned start date). In cases of short delays to the start date (of several weeks, for example), this period can be encoded as a "generic suspension" of 0% work in the Mobility Declaration, with the researcher actually starting work on the first day after the suspension is lifted. In this case, an amendment request must be submitted ca. 2 months before the original end date to extend the duration of the grant.

Note that in all cases the actual start date of the project must not be later than 1 September of the year following the signature of the grant agreement (i.e. if your grant agreement was signed in 2023, the latest possible start date would be 1 September 2024).

## 1.3 Your Host Institution and You

Your host institution (the "*Beneficiary*") is your employer for the purposes of your MSCA-PF project. For the duration of your project the beneficiary is required to provide you with an employment contract (or equivalent) with full social security coverage, to host you at its premises, and provide you with adequate [supervision](#).<sup>3</sup> This also means that you should inform your host institution as soon as possible of any events or circumstances which are

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<sup>3</sup> See the obligations outlined in Annex 5 of the grant agreement, Specific rules for MSCA actions.

likely to affect your employment and/or the implementation of your project (Articles 18 & 19 of the grant agreement). These could include, for example, encountering difficulties with your research or seeking changes in your training plan, or – on a personal level – serious illness or pregnancy which may require the amendment or suspension of the agreement (see next point). In turn, your host institution has the obligation to inform REA about any events or circumstances likely to affect significantly or delay the implementation of the project (Article 19 of the grant agreement).

### *Part-Time Work*

Under normal circumstances you are required to work full-time and exclusively on your MSCA-PF project for its duration (i.e. you cannot work on other projects or pursue additional professional activities during this time). However, part-time work is possible for either personal or professional reasons, as long as:

- The Project Officer at REA has been consulted
- This is agreed between you, the researcher, and your host institution
- You continue to work at the premises of the host institution during all periods of time charged to the project
- You work a minimum of 50% of your time (full-time equivalent) on your MSCA-PF project and this is accurately encoded in the MD
- This part-time work is on a daily, weekly or fortnightly basis (note that any period of absence for more than 30 consecutive days requires a suspension and cannot be charged as living allowance and mobility allowance)

Additionally, in the case of **professional part-time** (i.e. to combine your MSCA-PF with another professional activity):

- Reliable time records must be kept – either on paper or in a computer-based time recording system – which demonstrate the actual time spent by the researcher on the MSCA-PF project
- The researcher must not undertake the same research in more than one project
- There must be no double-charging of costs between two projects
- The researcher must not benefit from two MSCA grants at the same time
- The researcher's total professional time commitment must not exceed 100% FTE
- The part-time implementation of the project must not jeopardise the research and training activities of the MSCA-PF project
- For Global Fellowships (GF), part-time work for professional reasons must not take place during the outgoing phase

In all cases, part-time work must be correctly encoded in the MD. Each period of part-time work requires the creation of a new "recruitment period" within the existing MD line.

### *Suspensions*

Once your project has started, any periods of absence for more than 30 consecutive days must be reflected in a suspension (via encoding of 0% work in the MD). During such "generic" periods of suspension, no unit contribution can be claimed. Note that suspensions of your fellowship (other than for reasons of long-term leave – see below) should not exceed 30% of the project's duration.

### *Long-Term Leave Allowance*

Where your absence during a period of more than 30 consecutive days results in costs being incurred by your host institution (e.g. maternity, paternity, parental, sick or special leave) which are not covered by social security, these additional costs can be charged to the project. Such periods should be discussed with your PO and the beneficiary should encode these in the MD separately by selecting the specific reason for the long-term leave from the drop-down menu (e.g. "suspension for parental leave", etc.) under "Working Time Commitment". The percentage to be indicated in the MD should reflect the amount – expressed as a percentage of the combined living allowance (corrected by the country correction coefficient) and mobility allowance for the period in question – that the beneficiary is required under national legislation to cover as a contribution towards the social security costs arising from the researcher's leave. This may change over time (e.g. 20% for month 1 of the long-term leave, 10% for months 2 and 3, etc.), in which case each change should be encoded as a separate period. Note that periods of long-term leave when the full costs are covered by the national social security system should be encoded as long-term leave with a contribution percentage of 0%. During such periods, no unit contribution can be claimed for the project. In all such cases, please consult your PO before proceeding.

### *Telework*

The MSCA is a researcher mobility programme. Therefore your presence at the premises of your host institution is an essential part of your project and of the MSCA programme more generally. **Teleworking from abroad is therefore not permitted.** Teleworking from the same country as your host institution – where this is in line with the policy of your host institution – can be accepted, as long as it is agreed with the host institution, it is only for a limited period of time (e.g. one day a week), and it does not interfere with the correct implementation of your research project. In all such cases, please consult your PO before proceeding.

### *Income*

Not only must you work full-time and exclusively on your project (unless otherwise agreed), but you are not permitted to receive additional income from any other source for the research and training activities you are conducting in the context of your project, unless this is a "top-up" amount paid by – or via – your host institution, or by an institution mentioned in Annex 1 of your grant agreement.

## 1.4 Amendments and Formal Notifications

The grant agreement between your host institution and REA is a legal contract. Its provisions are therefore legally binding and must be respected. Any substantive changes to either the proposed work or the way that the project is implemented, whether they occur before the project starts or once it is underway, **must therefore be agreed and accepted by REA beforehand and, in some cases, via an amendment or formal notification procedure (see below).**

## Amendments

Events requiring an amendment to the grant agreement include:

- Transfer of the grant agreement to a new beneficiary<sup>4</sup>
- Change of secondment host
- Increase in the maximum grant amount (in exceptional cases, for example due to the addition of the Family Allowance or special needs allowance, should there be insufficient funds to cover them)

In particular, amendments may be required to reflect certain changes encoded in the MD, including periods of suspension or part-time work, which impact the end date of the project and which therefore must be reflected in an amendment to the end date of the reporting period. Such amendments should be submitted towards the end of the project (ca. 2 months before the original end date) so as to reflect the totality of the changes that have occurred.

**Note that amendments should be discussed beforehand with your host institution and with the PO at REA and should always be requested *before the actual change in question occurs*.**<sup>5</sup> Moreover, amendments **cannot** be submitted in the IT system – and therefore cannot be accepted ***after the end date of the project***. Detailed information on submitting amendments is available on the Portal [here](#), while a guide on the different types of amendments is available [here](#).

## Formal Notifications

Certain changes require a "Formal Notification" (via the Formal Notification option in the Portal) rather than an amendment. These include:

- Changes to the scientific supervisor (with letter of justification and the full CV of the new supervisor)
- Important changes in the scientific direction of your project (with letter of justification)
- Changes affecting your ability to implement the project as planned (e.g. due to difficulty to travel, unavailability of key infrastructure, resources, etc. – see Art. 19.3 of the grant agreement).

Again, in all such cases please consult your PO beforehand and ensure that the Formal Notification is submitted well before the change in question is scheduled to occur. Note that changes to the scientific supervisor, once approved by the PO, should also be encoded in the MD.

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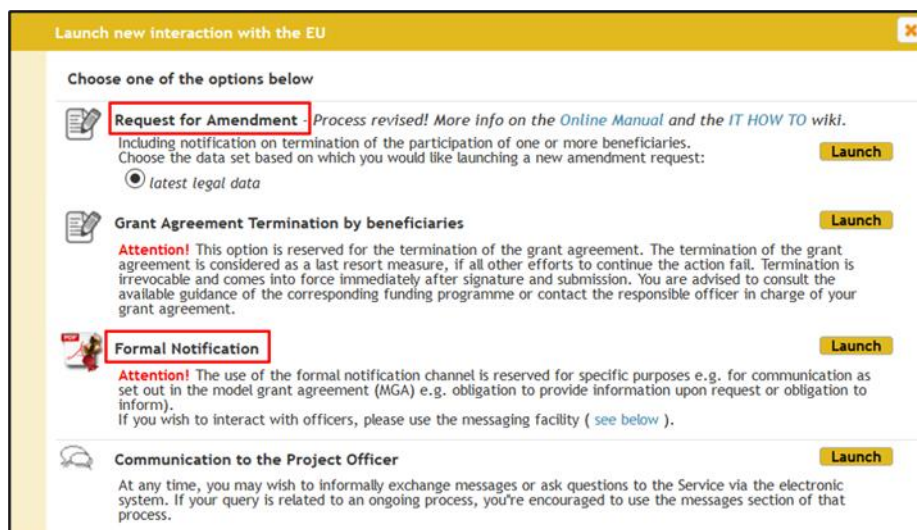
<sup>4</sup> Note that your personal circumstances (e.g. other professional opportunities, personal or family commitments) are NOT considered valid grounds for transferring the grant agreement to a new beneficiary.

<sup>5</sup> Amendments to increase the maximum grant amount should be requested ca. 2 months before the end of the project, knowing that in cases of early terminations there may be sufficient budget remaining to cover the additional costs without requiring an amendment.

## How do I request an amendment or submit a Formal Notification?

As with all other project-related actions, amendments and formal notifications should be done through the Portal under the "Manage Project" section, and the link "*Launch a new interaction with the EU*". From there, an amendment request or a Formal Notification or even a GA termination can be launched. In the amendment information tab, please complete the "AMD Justification" box providing a description of your request (including dates, reason, and other relevant information). On the basis of the changes to the grant data, the system will automatically select the relevant amendment clause, while some others have to be selected by the Project Officer (e.g. Change of Annex 1). Once the amendment request is prepared, please send it for review by clicking on "Lock for review" and "EU review". Our amendment team can then help follow the process.

Please note that requesting an amendment is the formal responsibility of the host institution, not the researcher.



The screenshot displays a web interface titled "Launch new interaction with the EU". It contains a section "Choose one of the options below" with four items:

- Request for Amendment** (highlighted with a red box): Includes notification on termination of the participation of one or more beneficiaries. Choose the data set based on which you would like launching a new amendment request:  latest legal data. **Launch** button.
- Grant Agreement Termination by beneficiaries**: **Attention!** This option is reserved for the termination of the grant agreement. The termination of the grant agreement is considered as a last resort measure, if all other efforts to continue the action fail. Termination is irrevocable and comes into force immediately after signature and submission. You are advised to consult the available guidance of the corresponding funding programme or contact the responsible officer in charge of your grant agreement. **Launch** button.
- Formal Notification** (highlighted with a red box): **Attention!** The use of the formal notification channel is reserved for specific purposes e.g. for communication as set out in the model grant agreement (MGA) e.g. obligation to provide information upon request or obligation to inform). If you wish to interact with officers, please use the messaging facility ( see below ). **Launch** button.
- Communication to the Project Officer**: At any time, you may wish to informally exchange messages or ask questions to the Service via the electronic system. If your query is related to an ongoing process, you're encouraged to use the messages section of that process. **Launch** button.

Figure 4: How to request an amendment or send a Formal Notification

## 1.5 Associated Partners

Any institutions which will contribute to the implementation of your project, particularly in terms of hosting periods of your research, should be encoded as "associated partners" and therefore already appear in the grant agreement.

### Associated Partners for Secondments

Under Horizon Europe, secondments in MSCA-PF projects can take place to institutions located anywhere in the world in order to contribute to the implementation of your project. During a secondment, the supervision of your research will be the responsibility of someone at the secondment host. **Secondments must be indicated in the grant agreement.** For European Fellowships, secondments must take place for a **combined period of no more than 1/3 of the project's normal duration** (i.e. max 8 months for a 24 month project). For Global Fellowships, **secondments are permitted for up to one third of the outgoing phase.** A maximum of three months of such secondments can be spent at the start of the project at the beneficiary (or associated partners linked to the beneficiary), allowing the

researcher to spend time there before going to the associated partner in the Third Country. However, **secondments cannot take place during the mandatory twelve-month return period** to the host organisation in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country.

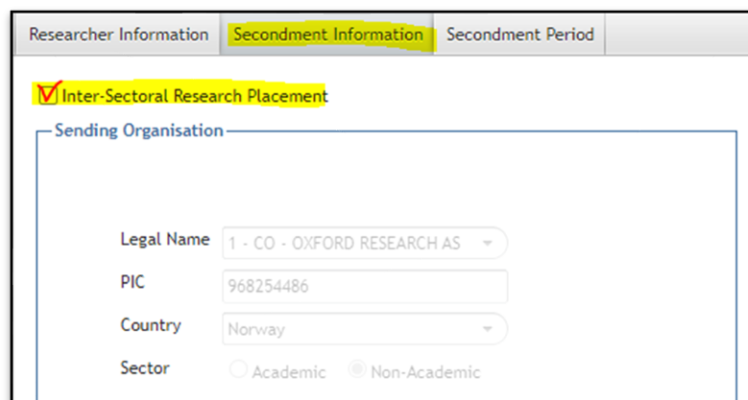
Note that if a secondment period is indicated in Annex 1 of the grant agreement (the secondment host should also appear in the text of the "core" grant agreement on pages 8-9), this is considered a contractual obligation. Any changes, for example to the institution hosting the secondment, or if you wish to add a secondment, must be agreed beforehand by the REA through the amendment procedure (see above). All such changes must be carefully explained and justified. Agreed secondments should be encoded in the MD, using the button "Add secondment to this recruitment". Select the associated partner which is hosting the secondment from the drop-down menu and encode the start and end dates of the secondment, as well as the time commitment of the researcher. Once encoded, the secondment will appear under the "Secondments" tab.

### Short Visits

Short visits have a different nature and pursue different objectives. Like a secondment, a short visit can take place anywhere in the world and implies mobility to another location outside the physical premises of your host institution for the purpose of implementing your project (for field work, for example). However, the work done during a short visit is supervised directly by your institution. By definition, short visits should only be for a short period of time and can only represent a small part of the project. They should not be encoded in the MD. Should you have any doubt whether something qualifies as a "short visit", please consult your PO.

### Associated Partners for Non-Academic Placements

Secondments and short visits **should not be confused** with Non-Academic Placements (NAPs), which in order to be eligible must have been requested at proposal submission stage (i.e. they cannot be added later on) and must take place **after the end of the normal duration of the project**. NAPs are only permitted to take place at the premises of a non-academic institution located in an EU Member State or HE Associated Country. This institution must appear in the "core" grant agreement. In the MD, NAPs are encoded under the "Secondment Information" tab ("Add secondment to this recruitment"), by ticking the box "Inter-Sectoral Research Placement" and then specifying the dates in question. Note that during a NAP your salary will continue to be paid by your host institution, irrespective of where the associated partner for the NAP is located.



The screenshot shows a web form with three tabs: "Researcher Information", "Secondment Information" (selected), and "Secondment Period". Under the "Secondment Information" tab, there is a checked checkbox labeled "Inter-Sectoral Research Placement". Below this is a section titled "Sending Organisation" which contains the following fields:

- Legal Name: 1 - CO - OXFORD RESEARCH AS
- PIC: 968254486
- Country: Norway
- Sector:  Academic  Non-Academic

Figure 5: Encoding secondments and NAPs in the Mobility Declaration



## *Associated Partners for GF Outgoing Phase*

The hosting institution in a Third Country during the outgoing phase is considered as an associated partner and will therefore appear in the grant agreement. You will be required to encode information on the duration of your stay at the associated partner for the outgoing phase, including any suspensions, in the Mobility Declaration. Note, however, that time spent at the *beneficiary* during the outgoing phase (up to the maximum of 3 months) does not need to be encoded separately in the MD. It must, however, be agreed beforehand with your PO.

## 1.6 Open Science

Open science is a legal obligation under Horizon Europe. Its purpose is to foster greater transparency and trust for the benefit of scientific research and for EU citizens.

### *Open Access to Scientific Publications*

The specific rules laid down in Annex 5 (Article 17) of the grant agreement require that all peer-reviewed scientific publications (including articles and long-text formats, such as monographs and other types of books) arising from your project – whether published during or after the completion of your project – are made available ‘open access’. This implies that the publications in question must be freely available online, **immediately upon publication** and with no restrictions on use, by **depositing either the final peer-reviewed manuscript accepted for publication or the final published peer-reviewed version in a "trusted repository"**<sup>6</sup> under CC BY or a licence with equivalent rights. You should be aware that you are required to retain sufficient intellectual property rights to comply with these open access obligations.

Since **no embargo periods are permitted whatsoever**, please take this into account when deciding which journals to submit articles to. In some cases, you may need to negotiate with the publisher in order to comply with these obligations. You must also ensure that information is given via the repository about any research output, or any other tools and instruments needed to validate the conclusions of the scientific publication.

Metadata of deposited publications must be open under CC 0 or equivalent, in line with the FAIR principles, and provide information at least about the following: publication (author(s), title, date of publication, publication venue); acknowledgement of Horizon Europe funding; grant project name, acronym and number; licensing terms; persistent identifiers for the publication, the authors involved in the action and, if possible, for their organisations and the grant. Where applicable, the metadata must include persistent identifiers for any research output or any other tools and instruments needed to validate the conclusions of the publication.

For more information, please consult the OpenAIRE guide on [how to comply with the Horizon Europe mandate for publications](#) and the [Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Agreement](#) (pp. 281-89). Links to the publisher’s website and to the trusted open access repository must be provided in the “Continuous Reporting” section of your project space on the Portal.

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<sup>6</sup> Please note that personal websites and databases, publisher websites, as well as cloud storage services (Dropbox, Google drive, etc) are not considered repositories. Academia.edu, ResearchGate and similar platforms do not allow open access under the terms required and are NOT considered repositories.

## Open Research Europe

Funded by the European Commission, [Open Research Europe](#) (ORE) is an open peer review publishing platform for research stemming from Horizon Europe and Euratom research funding across all subject areas. The platform makes it easy for beneficiaries to comply with the open access requirements of their funding and offers researchers a publishing venue to share their results and insights rapidly and facilitate open, constructive research discussion. All articles that have passed peer review will be indexed in bibliographic databases.

## Research Data Management

The specific rules laid down in Annex 5 of the grant agreement require you to manage the digital research data generated in the project ("data") responsibly, in line with the FAIR principles, and by taking all of the following actions:

- Submit a Data Management Plan (DMP) and regularly update it
- Deposit the data in a trusted repository as soon as possible and within the deadlines set out in the DMP
- Ensure open access via the repository to the deposited data as soon as possible and within the deadlines set out in the DMP, under CC BY or CC 0 or a licence with equivalent rights, following the principle "as open as possible, as closed as necessary."

Access to data may be restricted where this is against the beneficiary's – or the EU's – legitimate interests, but this should be justified in the DMP. Metadata of deposited data must be open under a Creative Common Public Domain Dedication (CC 0) or equivalent, in line with the FAIR principles and provide information at least about the following: datasets (description, date of deposit, author(s), venue and embargo); Horizon Europe funding; grant project name, acronym and number; licensing terms; persistent identifiers for the dataset, the authors involved in the action, and, if possible, for their organisations and the grant. Where applicable, the metadata must include persistent identifiers for related publications and other research outputs.

For more information, please consult the [OpenAIRE](#) guide on [how to comply with the Horizon Europe rules on Research Data Management](#). Further information on open science is available from the [REA website](#) and in the Horizon Europe [Programme Guide](#) (pages 40-56).

## 1.7 Acknowledgement of EU Funding

For all communication relating to the project and for any dissemination of results, including through scientific publications, posters, conference papers, etc. you are required to **ensure the visibility of the EU flag and to acknowledge EU funding** (see Article 17 of the grant agreement) like this:



**Funded by  
the European Union**

This image can be downloaded [here](#). Further information and guidance on how to communicate about your project can be found on the REA website [here](#).

## 2. Project Reporting

### 2.1 Continuous Reporting

Continuous Reporting refers to the submission of documentation and information relating to your project **during the course of its implementation**. The Continuous Reporting module will therefore be activated **as soon as your project has started** and is accessible via your project page on the Portal and should be kept updated throughout the lifetime of the project. Detailed information on each of the different sections and how to encode data in the Continuous Reporting module is available on the Portal [here](#).



Figure 6: Continuous Reporting toolbar in the Portal

#### MSCA-PF Deliverables

In Postdoctoral Fellowships there are different types of Deliverables which must be reported:

- **Data Management Plan** (compulsory for all projects by implementation month 6)
- **Career Development Plan** (compulsory for all projects by implementation month 6)
- **Dissemination, Communication and Outreach Plan** (compulsory for all projects by penultimate month of project duration)
- **Ethics Deliverables** (only for projects subject to ethics review with requirements)

All deliverables **must be submitted** via the Portal by selecting the link "*Continuous Reporting data*" and clicking the "*Deliverables*" tab. Only one document can be uploaded per deliverable, therefore please merge documents before uploading (or zip them), where applicable. Where possible, please also **avoid including any personal data or personal information** in the final version of the Deliverable, with the exception of your name and project acronym/number. This is because Deliverables listed as "PUB" (i.e. "Public") will be made **publicly available via CORDIS**, the European Commission's research and innovation results platform.

#### Data Management Plan

The Data Management Plan (DMP) is a document outlining how the research data will be handled during your project, and after it is completed. It describes what data will be collected/generated, what methodology and standards are used, whether and how this data will be shared and/or made open, and how it will be curated and preserved. **The DMP must be submitted within the first 6 months of the project.**

The European Commission provides a DMP template [here](#), the use of which is voluntary but recommended. As mentioned above, you will also be required to deposit your research data in a research data repository (such as [Zenodo](#)) and to take measures to enable third parties to access, mine, exploit, reproduce and disseminate (free of charge for any user) this research data.

## *Career Development Plan*

Your host institution is required to ensure that you establish, together with your supervisor, a Career Development Plan (Article 32.1(k)) or "CDP". The purpose of the CDP is to outline your training requirements, taking into account your research objectives and career goals. For example, this could include training on transferable skills, teaching, planning for publications, and participation in conferences and events aiming at opening science and research to citizens. The CDP can be updated when needed.

Your host institution should ensure that you are supported in ensuring the implementation of your CDP during the lifetime of your project. You are not required to follow a formal template when drafting your CDP. **The CDP must be submitted as a Deliverable by month 6 of your project.**

## *Communication, Dissemination and Exploitation*

Your grant agreement requires you to engage in communication, dissemination and exploitation activities relating to your project (Article 17 and Annex 5 of the grant agreement). A plan for this is scheduled as a project Deliverable towards the end of the project (usually the penultimate month of project implementation). However, you should start thinking about how you will communicate, disseminate and exploit the results of your research as soon as possible.

- **Communication:** You should promote your project and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the general public), in a strategic and effective manner.
- **Dissemination:** You should share your research results with potential users, including your peers in the research field, and to other commercial players and policymakers, including through scientific publications.
- **Exploitation:** You should aim to exploit the results of your research, for example through further research activities, developing, creating or marketing a product or process, or creating and providing a service. These exploitation activities should be pursued for up to four years after the end of the project.

Further guidance is available in the HE Programme Guide [here](#) and on the REA website [here](#). Please also **keep your Project Officer informed should your communication activities take place in the media** (TV, radio, newspapers, YouTube, etc.) so that REA can help ensure maximum coverage.

## *Ethics Deliverables*

Following the ethics review, the implementation of your project could be subject to the fulfilment of ethics requirements. All ethics requirements due once the project has started, are automatically included in the grant agreement in the form of Deliverables. These deliverables are known as "ethics deliverables" and, where relevant, will be placed in an automatically generated work package called "Ethics requirements".

## 2.2 Unit Contributions

"Unit contributions" refer to the fixed amounts that are paid to your host institution for the implementation of your project. These contributions are based on units, one unit being one implemented researcher month. The funds provided to your host institution for the purposes

of implementing your project are then divided into two sub-categories: those for the benefit of you, the researcher ("researcher unit contributions"), and those for the benefit of the host institution ("institutional unit contributions").

### *Researcher Unit Contributions*

These allowances are paid directly to you by your host institution and are to cover your private expenses, not those relating to your project. You should therefore request from your employer a clear overview of how your monthly allowance is calculated (both the gross amount and the amount net of all taxes and deductions). The total amount received may vary between institutions, even within the same country, because your host institution can deduct employer, as well as employee payroll taxes and social security costs from the gross salary.

- **Living Allowance:** this is the basic, gross amount (i.e. *before* taxation and compulsory deductions) that should be paid to you in monthly instalments. To ensure equal treatment and purchasing power parity, this amount is then adjusted through the application of a correction coefficient, based on the country in which you are hosted. Researchers recruited in higher cost countries therefore receive a higher gross living allowance than those recruited in lower cost countries.<sup>7</sup> The coefficients applied are indicated in the corresponding MSCA Work Programme and in the grant agreement. Note that each coefficient applies to the whole country in question, even if the cost of living may differ between cities or regions within that country.
- **Mobility Allowance:** This is a monthly amount and is intended to cover the costs associated with your moving to a different country in order to take up your position.
- **Family Allowance:** Should you be entitled to receive the Family Allowance, this should be reflected in an additional monthly allowance. Family is defined in the MSCA Work Programme as "*persons linked to the researcher by marriage (or a relationship with equivalent status to a marriage recognised by the legislation of the country or region where this relationship was formalised) or dependent children who are actually being maintained by the researcher.*" Should your family status change during the course of your project, this should be updated and reflected in the Mobility Declaration.<sup>8</sup> **You will be entitled to the Family Allowance as of the date that you become eligible to receive it.** An amendment to increase the maximum EU contribution will normally be required before the end of the project.<sup>9</sup> In the meantime, the additional cost should be met by your host institution, and this will be reimbursed by REA at the end of the next reporting period.
- **Non-Eurozone Members:** The project budget is calculated and paid in EURO; your host institution must also report their costs in EURO. Where your allowances are *not* paid in EURO (i.e. because your host institution is not located within the Eurozone), the allowances you receive may consequently fluctuate due to exchange rate changes. Your host is normally required to report the costs on the basis of an average

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<sup>7</sup> Note that for GF, two different country correction coefficients apply: for the outgoing phase, the coefficient of the Third Country in which you will be hosted, and for the return phase the coefficient of the EU member state or associated country that you will return to.

<sup>8</sup> This requires the creation of a new recruitment line so that, for example, the researcher was recruited for 5 months *without* family allowance, and then a new recruitment line is created for the remaining 19 months *with* the family allowance.

<sup>9</sup> Unless your project finishes early and there is remaining budget to cover the additional costs stemming from the addition of the Family Allowance.

of the official daily exchange rates over the reporting period. It is permissible for your host institution to underpay you on a monthly basis in order to hedge against this fluctuation, as long as you receive the correct amount by – at the latest – the end of your fellowship.

### *Institutional Unit Contributions*

These allowances are directly managed by your host institution to cover your professional costs and are divided into two categories: *Research, Training and Network Contributions*, and *Management and Indirect Contributions*.

- ***Research, Training and Network Contribution:*** This is a fixed amount for each month a researcher is recruited in the project. Although administered by your host institution, this amount is intended to cover the costs associated with your project as outlined in Annex 1 of your grant agreement. This could include, for example, the costs of attending training courses, conferences, or of going on secondment. This amount should also help to cover the cost of your research (e.g., consumables), as appropriate, and can also be used to cover other related costs, such as visas. Note, however, that this amount is normally administered by the host institution, not by researchers themselves.
- ***Management and Indirect Contribution:*** This is a fixed monthly amount per researcher month which is for the direct benefit of the host institution in order to cover the costs of their involvement in the project.

Note that the institutional unit costs can be shared with the associated partners listed in the grant agreement, for example to cover costs associated with hosting secondments or NAPs.

### *Special Needs Allowance*

Should you have a disability<sup>10</sup> of a nature that your participation in your project may not be possible without additional financial support, your host institution can request a 'special needs' allowance to contribute to the purchase of special needs items and services (e.g. assistance by third persons, adaptation of your work environment, additional travel costs, etc.) which have not been funded from another source (e.g. social security or health insurance). The request should be discussed beforehand with your PO. If the request is accepted by REA, the MD must be updated accordingly and an amendment to increase the maximum grant amount may be required before the end of the project.

## 2.3 MSCA Green Charter

The [MSCA Green Charter](#) aims to empower and inspire MSCA researchers, beneficiaries and consortia to minimise the environmental impact of their research on a "best effort" basis. This could be through, for example, minimising waste and harmful emissions, prioritising low carbon forms of mobility, or promoting the use of renewable and sustainable forms of energy.

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<sup>10</sup> Defined as a long-term physical, mental, intellectual and/or sensory impairment which is certified by a competent national authority.

In your Final Report you will be asked about the ways in which you have integrated the principles of the MSCA Green Charter into your work. However, it's never too early to start thinking about how to make your research project as sustainable as possible. For inspiration and ideas of how to minimise the environmental impact of your research, check out the dedicated MSCA [webpage](#).

## 2.4 Submission of Reports

The standard duration of PF projects is between 12 and 24 months for European Fellowships, and between 24 and 36 months for Global Fellowships. Those projects including a Non-Academic Placement, can claim an additional period of up to 6 months at the end of the project. Due to professional or personal reasons, however, projects sometimes have to finish sooner or indeed later than planned (e.g. due to suspension or part-time implementation). Whatever the final length of your project, together with your host institution you will be required to submit a Final Report once your project has ended.

In your report, you will be required to report on the scientific progress of your project (and deviations, if any), as well as your training and transfer of knowledge activities, secondments (if any), career development, the scientific management of the project, dissemination and communication activities, and on the project's overall impact. The standard Horizon Europe reporting template is available [here](#). More specific instructions for MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships will be forwarded to you nearer to the time.

Your report must be submitted **within 60 days following the end date of the project**. Submission of this report is a precondition for payment of the remaining amounts.<sup>11</sup>

### How do I submit my Final Report?

Through the Portal. Submission is the formal responsibility of your institution. Although it might be possible for you as the researcher to submit the report, we strongly suggest that you liaise carefully with your supervisor and host institution before doing so. A separate financial report must be submitted by a legal representative of your institution.

## 2.5 Submission of Questionnaires

Based on Article 18 of the grant agreement, funded MSCA researchers are required to submit [two questionnaires](#) about their experience: one immediately following the completion of the project ("Evaluation Questionnaire") and one two years later ("Follow-up Questionnaire"). We strongly value the opinions of all researchers funded through the programme and your responses to these questionnaires will help us shape the future design of the MSCA programme.

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<sup>11</sup> For all Global Fellowship projects, an additional Periodic Report must also be submitted within 60 days following the end of the first reporting period (i.e. at the end of the outgoing phase).

The Evaluation Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#) and the Follow-up Questionnaire can be accessed [here](#). You will need to enter project related information, including your project number and acronym.

### 3. Help and Support

Most projects are invariably implemented without any major difficulties. When problems do occur, these tend to be easily resolved together with your host institution. Indeed, your supervisor and/or those people at your host institution responsible for administering your project should be your first point of contact in case of difficulties or should you require assistance. Don't forget that **your host institution is your employer for the purposes of your project (and not REA or the European Commission)**. Your employment contract is **subject to the employment laws in your country of recruitment**. Moreover, your employer should have confidential and independent procedures in place to deal with any issues or disputes that may arise. Only in exceptional cases where problems remain after this dialogue, should you inform the relevant PO at REA.

Additional help is also provided by the network of **National Contact Points (NCPs)**, individuals within each EU member state and Horizon Europe Associated Country, who are able to provide expertise and support in your host country and/or own language. The names and contact details of the NCP(s) in each country are available [here](#). An EU-funded network coordinating the work of several MSCA-NCPs, called MSCA-NET, also offers information and support to MSCA applicants and funded researchers. Their website can be accessed [here](#).

For further general guidance on how to manage your project (and apply for EU funding), please consult the Portal [here](#) and [REA's dedicated webpage](#).

Should you experience IT problems when using the Portal, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#) directly.

#### 3.1 Further Reading and References

You can follow the MSCA on Facebook and X/Twitter for the latest developments, including MSCA events, further funding opportunities, competitions, etc.



@Marie.Curie.Actions



@MSCActions



[REA on LinkedIn](#)



### *The Marie Curie Alumni Association (MCAA)*

As an MSCA researcher, you are also eligible to join the [MSCA Alumni Association](#). Established as a not-for-profit organisation in 2014, the Association offers opportunities for learning, training and peer-exchange, an alumni directory, job offers, an events calendar, and other services of potential interest to PF researchers. With its network covering a vast geographical area, and working groups specialised in priority areas such as research management, career development, bridging science and business, and policy, the MCAA is also a platform able to connect to a large network of researchers. The MCAA is free to join and is open to all MSCA-supported researchers, past and present.

### *Useful Documents and Links*

- [MSCA homepage](#)
- [DG EAC Information Note for MSCA Fellows](#)
- [MSCA Guidelines on Supervision](#)
- [MSCA Financial Guide for Horizon Europe](#)
- [Guidance on your MSCA Grant and Reporting](#) (REA website)
- [MSCA Green Charter](#)
- [MSCA-NET](#) (MSCA NCP platform)
- [Horizon Europe National Contact Points](#)
- [Funding & Tenders Opportunities Portal Online Manual](#)
- [Horizon Europe Programme Guidelines](#)
- [Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#)
- [OpenAire open science guidance](#)
- [Open Science FAQ](#) (REA website)
- [European IPR helpdesk](#)
- [EurAxess](#)

